

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

N^o. 444.]

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1867.

[PRICE 2d.]

THE DEAR GIRL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," &c.

CHAPTER III. HARCOURT DACRES.

ANY Dieppe exile could gather, from such a conversation as that recorded in the last chapter, a fair notion of Mr. Dacres's character. On the circuit he was "a real good fellow," and the object of many more such compliments. He had good talents; could make a rattling, dashing speech; in fact, was said to be an Irishman, though he always repelled "the charge." Mr. Dacres could have been in good practice on the circuit, had he chosen. He could laugh a case out of court; but he was often accused of sacrificing his client to his speech; and in a heavy case of an elopement, an injured husband seeking damages, could pour out the most pathetic declamation, "leaving not a dry eye in court," and deeply moved himself, with faltering voice, and tears in his own eyes, would make the most "beautiful" appeal in the world—all pathos and piety. At the bar dinner Dacres would be in great feather, telling capital stories, taking off the injured husband, his client of the day, compounding punch for the mess, and finally starting a little loo at a snug table in the corner, which went on till two or three in the morning. It must be said that Mr. Dacres was punctilious in arranging his gaming debts, and many a little "fiver" or "tenner" bound to my little Lulu at Dieppe (shown to a few with a sort of pathetic paternal air) was handsomely diverted to the more pressing calls of honour. As for Dacres's "paper," it was always flying about; but he had that mysterious power, given only to men in these sort of difficulties, of somehow so dealing with charms—magician-like—as to keep himself "afloat." We, the more respectable and more scrupulous in payments, might strive in vain to get grace for fifty pounds.

He was absent a great deal from Dieppe, where the wife and child were kept, of course called away by business, running over there now and again when he could. Wise people often said to him he should get into parliament. "Why, a man that could make a speech like you, Dacres, ought to be solicitor-general at least." He could do other things

cleverly. He was connected with Mr. Black's well-known journal, and could rattle off slashing, vigorous articles on the word; that is, when the humour took him, or when Mr. Black could get hold of him. "That man would be worth his good twelve hundred a year, if he'd only stick to it." He could write an article for any review in truly brilliant style on the "cut of a horse"—and indeed, on all matters connected with the world in which that noble animal moves, was unimpeached. It was not surprising, therefore, that when nervous friends assured him solemnly—over punch—that "he ought to get into parliament—that it would be the making of him," he began at last to let the matter "come near him." A Scotch baronet, Trotter, who was going to travel in the East for two or three years, had met him at the cheerful board, and been "amused" by his humour. He was half inclined to let Dacres keep his seat warm for him; and being sounded on the matter, wrote at last to say that he would be glad to see Mr. Dacres at Trotterstown, N. B., for a few days, and talk the matter over.

This joyful news came when he was residing at Dieppe with his family, at a period of enforced domesticity, being very "low" indeed, not in spirits, but in other things. There were periods when he was obliged to be "dark," and when he complained pathetically he was not allowed to "breathe the air of his" (soi-disant) "native land." "After all, sir," he would say, huddling a few things into "the bag," "this is lonely work enough. I want kindly faces about the stove-side, the happy hearth, my boy. My poor girl withering in a foreign land, among the mounseers, and I enjoying myself like a beast!"

It was during one of these compulsory retirements, which had gone on longer than usual, and seemed to defy his usual skill for arrangement, that word came of what he called "the Trotter offer." A council was held. He had his darling Lulu on his knee. That young girl's eyes lightened and flashed; for she had a curious vigour of mind that often set Miss Pringle at her wits' end, and a born eloquence like that of her father.

"You must go, Harco," she said—she often spoke to him as a brother—"it is such a chance. Only think, to be in parliament, before the country, the nation! Why, you are lost as you

are. Mamma dear, if we strip ourselves of everything, we must send him off."

"Then I'm afraid the stripping won't go for much. But, in any case, d'ye take me for the selfish heartless father that would leave his wife and child without their little all, in *that* kind of a way? By the way," he added, suddenly, putting his child off his knee, "where's West? We must have his long head in, besides ours. Of course I mean long in the figurative way. Eh, wife, what could you sport, now, for the occasion—I mean in the way of wits?"

The wife was a gentle, rather stupid woman, with none of the Celtic perfervidum genius that was in father and daughter. She had been handsome; had been married for her beauty; was tall, worn, and, even now, elegant.

"What can I say, Harcourt?" she said, nervously. "I am the worst person in the world for advice."

He turned away impatiently. "She never took an allusion." He was pointing at something else. He had a certain delicacy, and would not say more.

"I'll go and put my head alongside of West's. We'll knock out something together for this grand occasion."

"Oh, papa," said Lulu, stopping. "No; you must not. You promised me before, that was never to happen again."

"Promise be hanged!" he said, angrily. "D'ye suppose I'm not to consult a friend?"

"Then if you do, Harco," said she, decidedly, "I'll go too. I'll forbid him to lend you money, I tell you before; he will do what I tell him, if it was to order him to go on his knees. You know he would."

"What the deuce will you have me do? Isn't that a specimen, now, of the way I'm treated in my family? Was there ever a poor hunted devil so checked? Ah, Miss Lu, ye should have been as delicate as all that, when Mother Pringle's last half came round!"

She gave a cry and started back. "Oh, you did that? Oh, how mean, how cruel, how unkind to expose me to that. Oh, mamma, mamma, I'm humiliated for ever and ever;" and she tossed her arms in the air, and walked to and fro very wildly.

"Gad now!" he exclaimed, "what's all this? You run off with things. I mean—I mean—what he gave that time I applied in that way; denied some of my own wants, which were pressing enough, to keep up the credit of my child. Of course it was in the way of a loan. Haven't I a regard for the credit and honour of the child that I—of my *own* child?"

This exceptional way of putting the loan transaction seemed purposely chosen; for his daughter, crying silently, merely sobbed out, "I shall never rest until that debt is discharged." Then she rose. "Go out, now, papa, and walk, or go to him and consult him. But not a word of that. Mamma and I will find out some more honourable way to help you."

In an effusion of fatherly affection he went towards her. He believed himself quite ge-

nuine. "I'm a poor miserable creature," he said. "God help me! I have no purpose and no principle. I don't know how I'll end. I wish I was thrown out like a dog somewhere. I'm unworthy of you both, two such angels."

"Poor, poor Harko!" said Lucy, running towards him; there were actually genuine maudlin tears in his eyes. "Don't say that, or you'll make us wretched. Keep up; things will come right, and—and you'll be M.P. yet."

Four small hands had found their way to the velvet collar and blue cloth shoulders, and the wretched father, as he called himself, broke from these sympathising creatures and went out into the open air to smoothe his brow. He had to take a "little glass" at the corner restaurant fatally near their residence.

Mother and daughter went in to council. Indeed, Lulu was chairman and council herself. For she had "the longest and strongest head of us all," her father said. There was in the family property a diamond brooch, a wedding present which Mr. Dacres had actually paid for, and to which he had often circuitously alluded. Lulu had, however, determined it should be kept for a grand emergency. That seemed to be arrived now, and it should satisfy the Pringle obligation and the journey to Trotterstown. It was worth about one hundred guineas.

The father was sent away to play for the stake. He went rejoicing. Miss Lulu repaired to her friend Mr. West, and, shocked and grieved, insisted on restoring to him what he had advanced for her; which he, knowing resistance was useless, accepted gravely, but a little annoyed. "Where did all this flush of gold come from?"

Lulu drew herself up. "Are we quite paupers as well as exiles?—is that the insinuation, Mr. West?"

"Who has insinuated anything, sharp Miss Lulu? If I wished to find out, I have not forgotten my old craft."

"A detective, I suppose," she said, with trembling voice. "I don't doubt your gifts; but I know your motive in all this—a generous one. To lay me under odious obligation—me—to have me in your power."

"What would I gain by that? What is the precious profit in laying you under an obligation, Miss Lulu?"

"Never mind," said Lulu, pacing up and down excitedly. "And don't call me *that*."

"You mean something. I insist on knowing. You make a charge—unkind, unfair, ungenerous indeed—which has hurt me much."

She saw his wounded face, and a pang came into hers. In an instant she had seized his hand, and made as though she would kiss it.

He stopped her. "Don't!" he said. "I would sooner have a fair, kindly judgment of me in your heart than such a theatrical amende."

"I am a wretch," she rejoined, "a rash, foolish, wrong-hearted creature, full of hasty suspicion. Forgive me. Say so, or I can never bring myself to look at you, speak to you, or come into your presence again. Oh, say so!"

"Well, I do. There!" he said, sadly. "But it will always be this old story; and I shall be always the same fool."

She smiled brightly, and shook her finger at him. "Though I say these things, you know how I like you *here*," laying her hand on her heart.

He repeated, in the same sad tone, half smiling, "I suppose I shall be the same, always—the same to the end of the chapter."

"The same what?" said she, smiling. "But I know what you mean perfectly."

This was but a common pattern of what very often took place between the gentleman and his young lady. Her mamma deplored their "sparring," and privately remonstrated with her daughter about her warm temper.

"Oh, mamma!" she would reply, "it makes us like each other all the better." She unconsciously uttered a truth. It was all nature in her, not pettishness nor vixenishness. She spoke out her mind, and could no more help speaking than she could help her eyes flashing.

CHAPTER IV. BROTHER AND SISTER.

WHEN Mr. Daeres had embraced his lady with great affection, and hurried away to the Royal, trolling a merry stave, he left gloomy faces behind him. Their last little stake had been played, and failed.

"I had a presentiment it would turn out this way," said Mr. West. "However, it can't be helped; we must make the best of it."

"What is to become of us?" said Lucy, helplessly. "Though poor papa cannot help himself, don't let us make a fuss to him about it."

"I have no patience with him," said Mr. West, slowly; "and I own I am sadly disappointed. Of course I have no right to say anything *here*, or to say so much." And he looked at Lucy; but she seemed determined to treat it lightly; perhaps she was rejoiced to see her father back.

"And why couldn't he stay? The first moment he arrived to go off with a gentleman he picks up on a steamer!"

"But, Gilbert," said his sister, impatiently, "what on earth has it to do with you?"

Miss Lucy was a little abstracted, and did not hear this speech.

"That gentleman with him!" she said, raising her eyes thoughtfully; "what a handsome man he was!"

"I knew you were coming to that," said Mr. West, sarcastically. "The notion has been dancing before your brain ever since, and now it comes out. I saw it all the time."

"One of the handsomest men I ever saw," she went on, with enthusiasm; "like an Italian tenor."

Mr. West laughed in the same bitter way, and said:

"You saw the Italian—Farini—that came down from Paris to give a concert—a fellow with chalky cheeks—well, *he* was an Italian tenor!"

She turned to him with colour mounting in her cheeks:

"You are out of humour to-night; what is the matter? Pray, why should I not remark a handsome face without being brought to account for it? Why do you lecture me, Mr. West, about tenors? You will not find me inclined to sacrifice my independence, or be obsequious to you, *as some of the others are*, on any terms. I give you fair warning, Mr. West."

"Oh, Lulu!" said her quiet mamma, quite shocked at this burst.

"I don't care, mamma," said the young girl, walking to and fro excitedly. "I am not going to submit to any influence or lecturing. I may be a poor weak girl, and his a strong powerful mind, and all that"—here she curtsied ironically—"but I give him fair notice I shall keep my freedom."

He turned away impatiently to the window. This was another "sparring" match, common enough between them.

Miss West said to her, bitterly:

"How sharp Miss Lucy Daeres is! Not so poor or so weak, after all, I suspect."

Before Lucy could answer, Mr. Daeres had entered the room, but quite changed—older, because "put out."

"There's a polite Englishman for you! We're nothing but boors, after all, I believe. He comes down to me at the Royal with a story—headache and feverish throbbing—exhausted—must go to bed. I don't believe a word of it. Then he says, 'Of course you'll dine here?' just the same, confound him, as though I were a servant! I wonder he didn't add, 'They'll take care of you in the servants' hall!'"

"Poor papa!" said she, going up to pat his head. "He was sick, recollect."

"Oh, be off, now! I'm tired, too, after my journey. When's your dinner to be ready? I suppose I must wait hours, and then get a bit of tough leather! Travelling hard and fast, and a bit of last night, and then, looking forward to a snug comfortable evening, to be served in that way!"

Who would think this to be the "delightful gay creature," all affection, and good humour, and heart! Mr. West was looking at him with unconcealed contempt and dislike.

"We must go now," he said. "Come, Margaret. It is unfortunate you should have come back to us with such a disappointment; but—"

"What d'ye mean by that, Mr. West?" said the other, with a lowering brow. "It's my own affair, wholly and solely; no man else's money was embarked in it; and I can set off after fifty Trotters, fifty times, if I like. Do ye know, West, I think at times you're devilish free, and—"

"Hush!" said that gentleman, quietly. "This, of course, is Dieppe, where we have all a pleasant license in language allowed us. I was speaking of the dinner disappointment; but it's no matter."

"No more it is, my holy St. Frances de Sales—my good man suffering. Ha! ha! All I say is, let every man let me alone, and I'll let him."

alone. I'm a little too old a boy to be lectured or brought to book by any of the professors."

Mr. West made no reply, but, with his sister, took his leave. There was a scornful half-defiant look in Miss Lulu's eyes as she gave him her hand. Brother and sister went away home, leaving the family to their tough bit of "leather;" "the best company in the world" being now about to vent his ill humour and troubles on his wife and daughter. These "delightful" creatures require the lamps lit, and the scenery, and full boxes and pit, to inspire them even with ordinary good humour.

Mr. Gilbert West and his sister walked silently home to their rooms in the Place. When they had sat down, and found the lamps lighted, the sister spoke:

"I hope to-night has at last begun to open your eyes. You, with your penetration, are beginning to see what that girl is."

He did not answer, but lay back in his chair, his fingers together, his eyes on the ceiling.

"She gave you as good a hint to-night as you, with all your cleverness, would give. There was no misunderstanding it. 'I must have my liberty. I will not be lectured,' I declare," added Miss Margaret West, warming up, "I felt my blood boil as she spoke. Such a rude, ill-regulated, ill brought-up creature! She has no respect for you."

"She never meant *that*, at least, Margaret. You are mistaken there."

"I tell you what she meant, though. She meant to tell you she was tired of your following her, and paying and giving her good advice. Have you no comprehension? She said it as plain as English words could put it. But is it any use talking to you? You, a man of your years, forty-two—double that school-girl's age. No wonder she laughs at you."

"It's a folly, an infatuation," he said, in a low voice. "I admit it. Call it anything you like."

"And then," went on the sister, in a soft voice, "the air and manner of that man. He has no respect for you. I wonder you allow him to treat you in that way."

"Could you not see, Margaret, he had been taking his cherry brandy?"

"Oh yes," went on the sister; "but it is time the whole folly should stop. I feel ashamed people here should be talking of your infatuation. They laugh at your excuse about me. Now I am well, have been well this year, and I am sick of the place, dying to get home."

"It will come back again," he said. "You know it will."

"Folly! A man turning grey, of ripe age, that ought to be minding his law-books instead of running after school-girls. Gilbert, I had always a high opinion of your sense and wisdom; but latterly really you are getting childish."

"You are right, Margaret," said he, in a low voice. "I begin to think you may be right."

"Oh, she is wise enough in her kind. She knows well what she is about. And that about the English officer. She saw that it annoyed

you, and she went on. I could have set her down if I could have trusted my temper."

These were hard sayings and cruel home-thrusts, and West felt every one of them. She saw his wounded look, and then went over to him.

"I only say this for your good, dear Gilbert, and I know well your affection for me, and what brought you here, and what keeps you here in this dreadful place. You think it is for my health, though indeed I am quite well now. But still I know that this—this liking of yours will grow into an infatuation, and mar all your life. She is only a child, and will treat you like a child. You will one day, when it is too late, deplore this miserable liking."

He looked up, and took her hand. "Margaret, I begin to be a little ashamed. You always say what is sensible. You are quite right. I do begin to see it is folly. But it is very hard. The worst is, she is no child; there you are wrong. Still I *do* begin to see the folly of it all. I have been a fool; but," he added, with a rueful smile, "not a very great one, so far."

"Indeed no," she said, kindly. "And the next best thing would be to let us get away from this terrible place. I am well now; I am, indeed. I shall have no relapse. The sights and doings of the set here make me miserable. Let us try some other place, and if it does not suit I will promise you to come back here."

"Yes," he said, eagerly, "it is a loathsome spot. Why should we be bound to it, if, as you say, you are quite well? I am as sick of it as you, and you know, though I have my weakness, why it is I have stayed here so long. Indeed, there was but that one reason."

"This is Thursday," she said, her cold face lighting up. "It is years since we were in Paris. Why not say Monday?"

"With all my heart," he said.

"Good, kind brother," she said, and went away with a light heart.

CHAPTER V. "COZ CONSTANCE."

HE remained walking up and down. In a few minutes he said, suddenly, "Yes, we must do it; it is the best course!"

The maid entered and put a note into his hand. He started as he saw the writing, and went hastily to the lamp to read it. It ran:

"Dearest Mr. West. I have been miserable since you left, about the way I spoke to you to-night—the light, cruel, and unkind way—and papa too. But he has returned disappointed, and you know it was not he that was speaking, it was the fatal cherry B. But, for myself, I could cry with repentance and grief. The truth is—shall I tell you? When you are by, I feel an influence that I know may be too strong for me one day, and, perhaps, I think that this sort of manner may be my best defence. For oh! you are so clever and wise, and I cannot bear to think of my own wretched inferiority when you are by. Now, I tell you this, though against myself; and if I give way again, you have leave

to quote my own confession against me, and so keep me in order.

"If you do not write me back a line, at once, to say you have forgiven me, I shall lie awake and be miserable all to-night, which I am sure you would not wish—though you may like to punish me a little.

"Yours ever sincerely—and repentantly—
"LUCY DACRES."

We should have seen the change in Mr. Gilbert West's face as he read; he almost smiled—such a happy look!

"I am not to be deceived," he said. Neither was he, though he knew that "lying awake all night" was one of those eager exaggerations which was characteristic of Lucy. She would have dropped asleep after, say, "an hour's misery." Enters now his sister, with a light step.

"I have been speaking to them below," she said. "It came on them with a great shock, but they say they will let us off with a month's rent."

"My dear Margaret," he said, eagerly, "we have changed all that, as these French would say. This has come in since. Will you trust my better judgment? *Now* will you call it folly?"

She looked at the writing, and threw it on the table impatiently. "Indeed, I *do* call it the worst of folly—madness and infatuation. Do you mean to tell me—you—Gilbert, a sensible man of middle age, that you have been changed by a screed of nonsense like this?"

He was in good humour, and could be superior to her now. "Well, since you ask me, Margaret, I *am* a little changed; at least, we shall not leave this on Monday. There is no *violent* hurry. The good people here would give out all sorts of things—come in for a fortune, or going home to avoid being arrested."

"I see it is no use arguing with you now," said she, angrily. "But remember, I tell you this will all end badly; and you will be sorry, one day, you did not listen to my advice. And when you are in your next fit of 'lows' and depression—when things have turned with you again, and you see it is all folly and infatuation, don't expect any sympathy from me."

"Indeed I will, dear Margaret," he said, smiling; "and I know I shall get it, too."

She turned impatiently and left the room. Mr. West was a wise man, and "a deuced long-headed fellow;" could see through an oak panel. But once in a Mahomet's paradise, all men are pretty much on a level.

The truth was, he had led a very dismal prison sort of life, his mind promenading in flagged whitewashed corridors and yards. Within the last few months he had come upon the open commons, the green lawns, and found the air sweet and fragrant.

At that moment a light step made him look up, and the third member of this household entered—a pretty reflective face, with black hair, with eyes that she fixed on those she loved with the innocent watchfulness of a dog's, but small in height, and slightly made. This

was Constance Hardy, a clergyman's daughter and third cousin. She had six sisters, and was, of course, intending to be a governess one day. The only drawback to this step was that *he* did not approve of it—it was the poorest and most miserable profession in the world; and what Gilbert West said was, for her, inspired wisdom.

He, however, had comforted her by saying that if any one was likely to succeed at such a profession *she* was, and insisted she should come over and stop with them at least a year, and learn French at the convent close by. The year was nearly run out—the most delightful year of her whole life. The intelligent reader will guess the reason;—at home, in the baby-house of a parsonage, the six sisters had married her again and again to splendid Cousin Gilbert, and had settled to come and stay with her whenever he should open old Westtown. This sort of compliment she had accepted with great pleasure, but sighed over it in private; for the happiness was Utopian, and about as far off as a coronet. Gilbert West was to her worshipping eyes as full of perfection as any angel. She knew, too, of that early trouble, now so long, long ago, which had coloured all Cousin Gilbert's life, and she felt every pang that he had felt. Therefore, when she had flown over with delight to Dieppe, she felt a pleasure that he had begun to take interest in the world again; for she had learned to think him a sort of ascetic, who was never to smile again. But, before a few hours had gone by, she found out the reason of this recovery. It gave her a pang; but as he was her chief thought, her first idea, she soon found a satisfaction in the idea that he was wakening up to life and happiness, and, after a little struggle, reconciled herself to welcoming and forwarding what was fatal to any little dreams she may have entertained herself. It was no wonder that Gilbert himself became to have an affection for her. He knew thoroughly her devotion and interest in him; admired her cleverness; but had not the faintest idea that her regard for him went beyond mere respect, gratitude, and intellectual admiration.

Margaret West, stiff, cold, unsympathising, save in one object and one direction, could look gently on Constance's affection, which she was shrewd enough to discover from the first. Indeed, it soon came to be her heartiest prayer that he could transfer all that interest to the gentle, trustful creature who so loved him. She had no jealousy, and tried to be as soft as she could to her. She even, in an awkward fashion, strove to make opportunities, and, exercising a kindly self-denial, let Constance perform the household offices—breakfast, tea-making, and the like—which were hers properly. Mr. West lived in his own day-dream, which hung as a cloud before his eyes, though he could not be unconscious of his cousin's ceaseless and gentle devotion, and often said to her suddenly, on discovering some fresh instance:

"You, poor good Coz Constance! Why do you think of such things, and take all this

trouble for me? I don't deserve it, and am only a selfish fellow, like the rest of us."

On this day she, too, saw the brightness and happiness in his face, and her old instinct told her the reason. That is but a poor selfish sort of love, as *she* knew, that can only love when we ourselves have a share in the transaction. She was content—or perhaps had trained herself to be content—at looking on at the little play from round the edge of the scenes—helping, contriving, prompting, but taking no direct part. A kind of sublime, unnatural virtue, it will be said, quite unknown to this earth, and wholly fanciful. She came in just as Miss West had gone out.

"Margaret has been scolding me, coz," he said. "She says I am turning a sort of middle-aged fool. You and she will put your heads together presently and agree in that."

"No, indeed," she said, earnestly; "you have always behaved wisely and well, and have such great sense."

"Well," he went on, in a sort of dreamy satisfaction, "I think I do know something about character; at least, when I was at the bar my 'brethren' used to tell me so. I feel an interest in that little girl, she is so fresh and natural; but Margaret has been conjuring up a terrible picture of coming horrors, madness, misery, and what not. Now sit down there, Coz Constance, for I know you have an interest in my foolish self, and tell me what you think."

"I think," said she, with an enforced earnestness which gave her a little pain, but only for a moment, "that whatever makes you happy, and changes the tone and colour of your life, is the best, and for the best, and should be done."

"Well, but about her? Is she this sort of witch, this dangerous mermaid, that will by-and-by drag us all on to rocks? Now, you know her. Tell me, do you like her? Just read that letter, which has had the effect of sending away poor Margaret in great excitement. Would you say that was acting—"

This was another trial, but she bore it bravely.

"Indeed it is genuine," she said, with the same eagerness. "And I think she is a charming, natural character, that would make any one happy."

"So I say. I am sure you are right."

"The only thing is," she went on, hesitatingly, "she is so young and inexperienced, and so new to the world, that—you won't think me absurd giving you advice, Cousin Gilbert?"

"Dear no," he said, warmly. "Well?"

"That young girls who have seen nothing are naturally changeable, and the fact of their feeling themselves at all bound would almost make them think it a restraint. So—"

"So! now what on earth are you coming to, wise woman?" he said, in great amazement.

"What Rosicrucian refinement are you going to start on me?"

"I mean," she said, "that I would not think of any promise, or any engagement, or anything of that kind. I would even not seem too

anxious to *her*. Because she has seen so few, and if any one else—"

"That was handsome and fine-looking, I see," he said, smiling. "But you are quite right; and though the advice is wonderfully Machiavellian to come from my simple, innocent Coz Constance, still I think it most sensible and judicious, and I will follow it."

"It is for your sake," she said, earnestly. "For Margaret may be right; and we are both interested in you, and if you play *everything* on a single chance like this—"

He looked grave. "A thousand thanks!"

A HOLIDAY ON HORSEBACK.

WHEN, two hundred years ago, Mr. Samuel Pepys desired to go from London to Huntingdon, the first necessity of his case was to purchase a pair of jack-boots at St. Martin's-le-Grand: a quarter of the town famous for those articles of riding gear; and his next care was to hire a post-horse. He was not an equestrian either by nature or habit. When mounted, he was apt to grow frightened, and to wish himself well out of any crowd or difficulty. Moreover, the horses used in those days were mostly stallions, always ready on every opportunity to fight with each other, to kick, and to bite, and to rear, and otherwise to deport themselves uncomfortably. It was, no doubt, therefore, with some trepidation and uneasiness that the good naval secretary prepared himself for the saddle; but there was no help for it, unless he bought a coach especially for the journey, in which case it would have taken about four days in fine weather to accomplish the sixty-odd miles, and have cost twenty pounds beyond the price of the coach. To go even to St. Martin's-le-Grand from the court or official quarter of the town was an enterprise of some difficulty and of some peril. If the passenger went on foot, he was liable to be hustled by bullies, to be beaten or to have his nose slit by the servants of any nobleman who took offence at his demeanour. If too peaceable to allow a quarrel to be fixed upon him, he might easily tumble down an open cellar; if he had an unscrupulous enemy or a pretty wife, he might be suddenly arrested as a Catholic. If a rich man, he was likely to be kidnapped for ransom, or till he gave his consent to his daughter's marriage with a sharper. If he took a hackney-coach, the driver probably drove him to his own lodgings, a fearful nest of fever, depravity, and bad smells, where he was made to wait for some hours while the jarvey changed horses; and he was lucky indeed if he got clear out of the transaction without being robbed. The hackney-coach, too, made of rotten wood and mouldy leather, lined with musty straw, and held together by a single bolt, frequently broke down upon the road, or the bottom came out, and left a passenger suddenly seated in the quagmire of an undrained street. Mr. Pepys, however, escaped all these mishaps, and, when fairly

equipped, took the road, and, changing his horse at the usual stages, arrived at his destination in about twelve hours. Pistols and a sword formed a necessary part of his travelling dress, as they did of that of every prudent man.

In these times the prudent man takes, instead, an omnibus, a cab, or an underground railway, to King's-cross. There he finds a small town erected especially for his accommodation—a town ruled by a government of which Mr. Pepys never dreamed; a government whose officers are and must be active men, and not dummies, the effect of whose good or bad rule being immediately visible and felt by the townspeople, or shareholders, they seldom neglect their duties; a government in which a shrewd person is justly valued, and not sat upon by a titled oaf. In this model city a modern traveller may provide himself with anything, from a sandwich to a biographical dictionary, and stepping into a comfortable carriage, be pleasantly whirled, without fatigue, to Huntingdon in precisely one hour and fifteen minutes, and at a cost of eight shillings and ninepence sterling.

I have been led into these reflections because it is to Pepys's house we are now going on a pleasant mission concerning horses and horsetaming. In the same carriage are seated a farmer, a clergyman, a tailor, a horse-dealer. Let us lazily, lazily, lazily hear what they have to say. It may do us good. The farmer is a sound agricultural chemist. He knows all about artificial manures. He is far from being bigoted or obstinate. He says that the present prices of wheat continue to pay the British farmer, but he knows that future prices will not do so, and that every acre of British land will soon return to its natural and most profitable state of pasture. Even now the best part of farming seems to be weaning calves; nearly thirty per cent to be realised on it, barring mishaps. He says landlords do not like small tenants. They like to put their ground into farms of at least a thousand acres. He knows that farming, to succeed well, ought to be conducted, like all other business, on a large scale, and with a large capital; and that generally there is not enough capital applied to farming. He is a keen-eyed, neatly dressed man. He has no peculiarity, except a slight tendency to use long "public" words; and when mentioning his landlord, he speaks of him as A. B. Fatlands, Esq., and not merely as Mr. Fatlands. Otherwise, he might be a medical man, or a lawyer, or a city tradesman. The clergyman also is very different from the parson of the old school who married the waiting-maid, and left his patron's table as soon as pudding was served. The refinement of this ecclesiastic is rather oppressive until he warms; but then he tells a goodish story of a friend of his who was plucked at Cambridge, because he would go fishing on an examination day. The tailor keeps hunters and makes thousands and tens of thousands yearly. He is going to sport over the lands of a railway speculator ten times richer than himself. What knew Mr.

Pepys of sporting tailors and railway Plutos? And the horse-dealer, and the nobleman? The first is a quiet, keen-looking gentleman, remarkably clean and sedate in his appearance. His business extends all over the world. He is an experienced traveller, and an accomplished linguist, who buys horses in thousands to mount the cavalry of armies, and to whom peace or war is a far more vital question than to most professional diplomatists. Lastly, the peer derives the best part of his income from his share in a commercial firm. Mighty changes these since the time of Mr. Pepys!

Although nearly all comfortable Englishmen now live in the country, and London is fast becoming little more than a gigantic workshop for all trades and professions, few parts of the kingdom are so little known as Huntingdonshire. It seems to lie out of the way of smug tradesmen and brisk lawyers; and land is still to be got for sixty pounds an acre. Huntingdon is still, not indeed the Huntingdon of Cromwell, but—not to put too fine a point upon it—let us say the Huntingdon of George the Third.

First in the objects of interest near it is Hinchinbroke, the home of the old cavalier family of Cromwell. It was here that the chief of that loyal house, Sir Henry, called "the Golden Knight," gave to Queen Elizabeth a very gorgeous festivity, and his son, Sir Oliver, treated douce King Jamie to the best dinner he ever had in his life, when his majesty was coming up to London to take possession of the English crown. It is said to have been the most magnificent entertainment ever presented by a British subject to his sovereign. The result of that great dinner may be, perhaps, still traced in our history, for by this and similar profusion the splendid gentleman so ruined himself that his estate passed into the hands of his lawyer, Sir Sydney Montague, ancestor of the Earls of Sandwich. If Oliver Cromwell, the nephew and godson, had not lost all hope of inheriting so fair a domain, he might never have become a malcontent and a rebel, and a founder of British liberty.

The moderate sized family house of Hinchinbroke, though partly burnt down, has been so rebuilt in accordance with what was probably its first plan, that it is one of the quaintest of old English residences. It is full of peaked windows which exclude the light, and of passages leading nowhere, and low-browed wainscoted rooms, looking out on gardens which shut away small portions of air and light from the use of the family; gardens defended from wind by ivy-covered walls, marvellously trim and pretty, but with no fair view, no noble prospect of hill and valley. Our ancestors had a strange passion for darkness. They loved to sit and sing and drink in it for hours. When angry, they shut themselves up in the dark, and scolded through the door. Here is a very fine portrait of Charles the Second, probably an original, given by the king to the first earl. It represents him as handsomer than any of the other portraits—a

slim, dark, melancholy man, thoughtful and rather tired. Here, too, is a portrait of the bluff sailor earl himself, who brought Charles to England, and founded the fortunes of his own family and that of Mr. Pepys—a kind, handsome, jovial face; everybody's friend, everybody's lover; but with such a scorn of your mere citizen, that he could say he would "rather see his daughter with a pedlar's pack upon her back than married to one of them." A noble cavalier, proud, brave, ignorant, high-hearted. The portrait of Cromwell is a poor one. There is a handsome likeness of the present earl, given him by a grateful tenantry; a deserved tribute to a good man.

Once out of the boxed-up little gardens, and beyond the skittle-ground, the outside park is so lovely, that it seemed strange that its possessor should have ever cared for the vulgar strife of petty politics and court intrigues. The landscape and grounds are still the same as those which Cromwell looked upon. They are studded with majestic oaks and spreading yew-trees, and fair with lovely uplands, where the cows browse upon grass crisp and fresh.

And now away again past the portress's lodge. Her pleasant curtsy and good-bye rousing an astonished echo amidst the stillness of the tranquil day, as we leave the place all bathed and sleeping in sunshine and repose, with its old historic memories like a halo round it. The caw of the rook and the coo of the wild dove are heard among the trees and fields. Our footsteps grate strangely upon the gravel of the road; every footfall very loud. The gnat and the mote are abroad in the sunbeam, and the prosperous bee wings his flight towards the gardens. Birds sing delightfully on every hedge-row. Child-voices come, and go, and prattle, as the children stop to gather berries, and romp on again. Pheasants call from their cover; a distant mill clatters busily; the still bubble of fish oozes to the surface of the placid water, unruffled by a breeze. So along amidst these sweet country sights and sounds, with echoing footsteps, a solitary market-cart approaching in the distance—all steeped in sunshine—blessed healthful English sunshine, which lights, and warms, and gladdens, and which does not blast and scorch! Could the old fable, that the children of the earth gained strength whenever they returned to her, be really meant for application to Londoners out for a holiday? I would give something to lie down for an hour in these fields; I am sure I should be the better for it. In Russia it is found a sovereign cure for rheumatism to bathe the patient in warm earth on which the sun shines.

But here we are at the house of the late S. Pepys, Esq., at Brampton. It is but a mile from Hinchinbroke. This old manor-house of Brampton really was Pepys's house, and not the farm-house at the entrance of Brampton village, as is sometimes supposed. Here is the close garden where the guineas were buried when the Dutch came up the Thames, and all which the prince of gossips never could find

again when he tried to dig them up—as quaintly chronicled in his diary.

As if in strange banter with its old association, and with Pepys's hatred of horsemanship, Pepys's house has now become the home of a horse-tamer, well known by all the country round. We are kindly welcomed by a jovial, sensible-looking man, of the true Cromwell or Huntingdonshire build. Strong, rather thick-set, of plain speech and manners, he might well have been a country mayor or town councillor of old-fashioned ways but for his dress, which is professional, and shows that he is indeed the horse-tamer himself, a successful disciple of Mr. Rarey. But says he, confidentially, at an early stage of our acquaintance, "Rarey's cream was all skim-milk before I took to it, so there are no five thousand guineas for me." However, he still seems to do very well, and he told us readily and good naturedly how he did it.

"It is, you know, sir," said he, "quieting of them by kindness" (the great politeness of his discourse gave an infinite zest to it); "and if you will only oblige me by coming along in here, you shall see for yourself."

So we entered a dim little shed, where a bright glimpse of garden came in through a circular hole in the wall, and our entertainer took a strong, raw-boned, thorough-bred colt by "Richmond," and threw it down on the soft ground, after the manner of Rarey. The horse made several desperate efforts to get up; but, after fighting furiously, soon lay quite quiet and subdued, with eyes looking humbly up for some sign of encouragement and kindness. Sitting gently down upon the prostrate colt, and stroking its nose and ears softly, the trainer continued his agreeable teaching by beating a kettle-drum at its ears, opening and shutting an umbrella violently before its eyes, and dancing on its ribs.

"Horses," he observed philosophically, "take a liking to a man who manages of them properly—for their good and our own. Now, my system subdues them, as you see, and *don't take too much out of their legs*. You have no call to pull at a horse to make him back."

The colt was now erect. A lamb in behaviour, and was being taught to back.

"If you pull at him, he's stronger than you are, and he gets the pull against you. When I want to make a horse back, I stand before him, and tap him smartly in front. He soon gets away from the whip; and then, if you pull the rein gently, he will learn what you want. When a horse once knows what you want, I say that man does no wrong to punish him if he don't obey, with whip and with spur, one or both; only do not go for to punish him when he don't know what he has done wrong, or hasn't done right."

A child steals in to us, a round-headed, golden-haired, rosy-checked boy, sturdy and shy, but not indisposed to entertain friendly proposals, having reference to "suckers," as they call lollipops down here. He nestles up to his

father. "He's a spoiled child, sir." They stroke and pat the colt together. I think, as I look at them, that if ever I buy a few thorough-breds, I could trust them very safely in such kind and skilled hands.

The new method of horse-taming, so easy and expeditious, is a great improvement on the brutal old system of lunging, whipping, and spurring a horse into obedience. "But, sir," said the operator, "no gentleman should try this game himself." And, indeed, it was so amusing and pleasant, that it seemed more like a "game," than a business. The Expert went on to explain: Unless in hands perfectly cool and experienced, nervous or ill-tempered horses would be rendered by it permanently cowardly and vicious, so that there would be no future possibility of handling them at all with security. Or, while staggering about, in a confined space, on their hind legs, would be nearly certain to injure their hocks, and to throw out curbs. Also, an unskilful operator would be almost sure to come to signal grief himself. An incautious shoulder might be very easily dislocated by a determined plunger, or half the bones of a rash adventurer's chest driven in; and a rough colt's head brought suddenly in contact with an enthusiast's teeth, might give him much painful leisure for tardy reflection while under the hands of the dentist. It is prudent, therefore, thoroughly to master Mr. Rarey's art before attempting to try issues with so wilful an opponent as a cross-grained colt. But this is to say no more than that horse-taming is like every other business by which men earn a livelihood. It requires a long and painstaking apprenticeship before it can be turned to any good account.

Presently a gentleman farmer comes in with a colt to break. He, too, knows that the price of wheat must soon fall far beneath all English competition. He is anxious to turn his attention in time to horse-breeding. Nothing can promise better if he breeds fairly. He will have only to give confidence to the London dealers, and to prove to them that sire and dam of every colt is of pure blood and sound constitution, to select fashionable stock with sound judgment and to feed liberally, to command his own prices. London horse-dealers have always more commissions on their hands, for blood cobs and thorough-bred hackneys, than they are able to execute, at any price. First-class horses will fetch seven hundred pounds each, and can be bred for one hundred and fifty. Cattle-farming and horse-breeding are the only true safe investments for British farmers, and those who cannot manage to make it answer will have to give up that trade, and find another—perhaps a worse one. It must not be forgotten that, as horses may now be broken without any injury whatever to their legs, they may be sent into the market at three years old, instead of four years: a very important consideration to the breeder. A three-year-old, if carefully trained and taught, will do very well for light work, and cannot be

put at it too soon. He will make a far better horse for a timid girl than a five-year old, and may be then educated to do nearly anything but talk. He could not, however, have been broken even, without permanent injury, under the old system. It is always better, and, in the long run, cheaper (we still borrow substantially from our intelligent farmer) to breed first-class horses; for it costs as much to rear a fiddle-headed, cat-hammed, clumsy brute as it does to bring up a beauty as fine as paint. Even a half-bred horse resembles an article with the royal arms on base metal. To get pure-bred horses it is always necessary to go to the best blood, and there are in England about three hundred blood stallions whose services are to be got at prices varying from five guineas to fifty. Perhaps twenty guineas would be a handsome average in the hands of a good judge of figure. The brood mares to be bought at moderate prices are very numerous. But it is right to say that a great many thorough-bred horses die before coming to maturity.

To struggle out of the pupil state to which I was reduced by all this useful knowledge poured out upon me, I here threw in a little information of my own about prices. Hacks of high character, in the right hands, sell readily at figures varying from one hundred and fifty to seven hundred pounds; seldom below, still more seldom above those sums. Park phaeton horses, well matched, and stepping well together, produce from three hundred to eight hundred pounds the pair; single-harness horses of real quality range from two hundred to seven hundred pounds each. Hunters may be sold at fancy prices, from fifty pounds to a thousand; but nothing of much account, with character, under three or four hundred, except for light weights, or cattle with an "if and an" about them. A pair of very large blood carriage-horses were recently sold for two thousand guineas. It is useless to quote the price of race-horses, which is regulated by their engagements, and is as much a speculative affair as was the price of tulip-roots formerly in Holland. A "screw," not worth five pounds off the turf, may be cheap at five thousand upon it.

Such exceptional sums paid for horses of the very highest class figure and fashion must not, of course, be taken as the average price of ordinary horses. That, strange to say, has varied little, if at all, since the time of Solomon. Two hundred years ago in England, common country nags were worth from ten to fifteen pounds, and that is still about their present price at fairs and markets. Sir G. Carteret (temp. Charles the Second) gave forty pounds for a good hackney; a useful horse enough may be now bought for the same sum. Pepys gave fifty pounds for a pair of black carriage-horses; and doubtless a pair quite as good as the awkward draught cattle of that day would not cost more in ours.

Even our highest prices are by no means re-

markable for their novelty. Very rare and beautiful horses were always sold for immense prices by those who knew how to sell them. Alexander gave four Roman talents, probably about eight hundred pounds sterling (then an enormous sum), for Bucephalus; and even our own dounce King Jamie, no very dashing cavalier, gave five hundred pounds for a small stallion, an amount perhaps now at least equal to five thousand. In Canada, horses are sometimes sold by weight, and a two-year-old, bred by Mr. Charles Philips, of Cracop, in Cumberland, fetched four shillings and eightpence a pound.

Our equestrian conversation concluded with several useful hints from our host: The best test of really good breaking is, that a horse should have a manageable mouth. For if a horse's hind legs are well put on, his mouth depends almost entirely on the skill and judgment of the breaker. It ought to be sensible to the slightest touch. The ear of the horse has been well said to lay in his bridle. From the insensible quality of his hoofs, he has no active sense of touch, and therefore no safe guide but the bit, so that to ride a horse with a bad mouth is a very perilous proceeding. In hunting it is particularly so, for he can never be prevented from rushing at his fences, or through gates, and is very likely to jump on any one who may be in a little difficulty in front of him on the landing side of a fence. He will also tire himself and his rider twice as soon as if he went pleasantly in hand. Bits may indeed do something for a hard puller, and many have been invented. The best, if chosen with good judgment, according to the peculiarities of the horses to wear them, are: 1, the Chiffney; 2, the Gag; 3, the Bentinck; 4, the Hanover; 5, the Secunda; 6, the Bucephalus Noseband; and 7 (for horses with dry outstretched tongues), the Iron Duke. A clever adaptation by our trainer's son of the lip strap to the port curb bit, was shown to us; which seemed both humane and effectual. But if a horse's mouth has been roughly handled and spoiled by the breaker, a man might as well get astride a steam-engine at full speed, and try to stop it by pulling at the hand-rail, as trust to any bit or bridle whatever.

"I tell you what, sir," said our booted and spurred Mentor, heartily, "it's of no use thinking of trying to teach a horse, or any other animal, without kindness and good temper. Cruelty breeds resistance; but proper severity breeds obedience. The horse must not be treated with disrespect. He is a high-spirited animal, and feels every sensation of pleasure and pain most keen. Horses should be specially taught the sort of work they are expected to do. Now look at this hunter!"

A light-built, gay-looking thorough-bred was passing into a paddock for a lesson in jumping over a swivel bush hurdle. Without spur or whip, the rider—the horse-breaker's son—rode the mare steadily at the fence, and she went over without touching a top twig, clearing nine yards in the leap.

"The great thing, sir, is to bring into workman-like ways; not to be fussy and flurried at their fences, and to take good measure in their paces, so as to take off at the right spot." Then he went on to inform us that hunters should be carefully handled at a very early age, if they are intended to become temperate and handy. They may be ridden gently by a light weight with good hands, at three years old, over small fences. At four they ought to be shown hounds; but they should only be allowed to follow them at a distance, after the fences are broken down; for if you put them to large leaps at that age, they are apt to get alarmed, and never make steady fencers afterwards. Above all things, avoid getting them into boggy ditches, or riding them at brooks; but they should be practised at leaping small ditches, if possible, with water in them, the rider facing them at a brisk gallop, for this gives a horse confidence and courage. The old custom of teaching colts to leap, standing, over a bar is now obsolete, and they are taught to become timber-jumpers simply by taking timber as it comes across country—the present rate of hounds gives no time for standing leaps. The circular bar, however, is not a bad thing, if in a good place, and well managed. Every description of fence that your hunter is likely to meet with should be placed within a prescribed circle on soft ground, the man who holds him standing on a stage in the centre. Another man, following the colt with a whip, obliges him to clear his fences at a certain pace, and in a very short time a good-tempered colt will go at his jumps with pleasure.

Here let me observe—for the conversation had ended—that no matter how carefully a hunter may have been trained, until you taste and try him in the field, it is hard to say whether the right stuff be in him. The best judges are often deceived by outsides and school performances. A few general rules may, however, be given, which will be found of certain application. In a hilly country, for instance, nothing has a chance against a pure thorough-bred. Lengthy horses always make the best jumpers, if they have good hind quarters, good loins, and good courage. Extraordinary things have been done by such horses. In 1829, Dick Christian jumped thirty-three feet on King of the Valley; and Captain Littler's horse, Chandler, cleared thirty-nine feet over a brook at Leamington. The most dangerous of all horses in the field is a stargazer. A hunter should carry his head low, as by so doing he is less liable to fall, and gives his rider a firmer seat. All wild horses lower their crests in leaping. It is, however, the peculiar excellence of going well through dirt which decides the real value of a horse for our best hunting counties. To find out this quality, he must be ridden fair and straight. If he flinch on soft ground, he is of no use.

No matter how wide a horse may be, if he is not deep in the girth he cannot carry weight, and is very seldom a good-winded horse, even

under a light man. One of the best things that can be said of a hunter is, that at first sight he appears two inches lower than he really is. Short-legged horses leap better and safer than long-legged cattle, and go faster and further under hard riders.

Horses with straight hinder legs never can have good mouths. He should have well-placed hinder legs, with wide hips, well-spread gaskins, as much as possible of the vis à tergo, well-knit joints, short cannon bone, oblique pasterns, and largish feet. The bone of a hunter's hock cannot be too long. These are the points for strength and bottom. "Handsome is as handsome does," and an old whip once said to a nobleman who remarked that his staunch old horse who had carried him through so many troubles had an awkward head: "Never mind his 'ed, my lord; I ain't a-going to ride on his 'ed." Indeed, what is called the perfect model horse is by no means the best. A horse's constitution may be too good. Horses of a very hard nature, and very closely ribbed up, are large feeders with great barrels, and do not make brilliant hunters. They require so much work to keep them in place and wind, that their legs suffer, and often give way when their constitution is in its prime. Horses with moderate carcasses last much longer, and, provided they are good feeders, are usually bright and lasting enough, if otherwise well shaped. Finally, a hunter should be well seasoned. Few five-year-old horses are fit to carry a gentleman across country; for he cannot be sufficiently experienced to take a straight line.

About fifteen hands two inches is the best height for a hunter. His action should be smooth, or it cannot last. The movement of the fore legs should be round, not high; the horse should be quick on his legs, as well as fast.—It was now time to go.

"Good-bye, Mr. Hawkes" (for such, as Pepys's contemporaries would have written, is our hero's name); "but," we add, taking a last look at the picturesque old house, and thinking of the buried treasure, "do you ever find any old coins in your garden?"

Mr. Hawkes does not believe that money ever grew in his garden; but his wife speedily produces "three old halfpennies, sir, that we found digging the potatoes last year."

A little pocket-file removes the rust of two centuries, and something like pure gold appears beneath.

"Wash them well in strong vinegar, and look at them again," was my advice.

"Would you like to have them, sir?" says Mrs. Hawkes, with a blush of hesitation which would have become a duchess.

"Why, no, thank you; but, if they do turn out to be gold, it is just possible that they may have once belonged to a certain Mr. Pepys."

The evening shadows lengthen along the grass; the mist begins to rise where the land lies very low. I must go, but not until I have mounted one of the trainer's pupils.

A game young horse comes up, sniffing the

wind, and looking kindly at a fence leading into the field.

"Does he bridle well, Mr. Hawkes?"

"Perfectly!"

And he does; he goes quite quietly at his fence, takes me over without hanging an ounce on the bit, and then to the Huntingdon station.

So I return to London, more satisfied than ever that kindness is the best teacher, horse or man, the wide world over, and pleased enough with my holiday.

THE SPIRIT OF YOUTH.

'Twas night; perchance the shadows deep my wondering sense beguiled:

Methought, amid the firelight gleams, like to a soul-clad child,

A gentle spirit rose and stood before my face and smiled.

Its lambent eyes had all the glow of life's first spring-like tide,

And thus I knew, full surely knew, though long ago it died,

I and my buried youth were standing friendly side by side.

No grace was gone, no touch of time had dimmed the fearless glance;

The tireless footstep swept the floor like to a floating dance;

And I felt the clear, shrill, flute-like voice strike through me as a lance.

Yet, but for one soft, fitful touch of pain all sudden thrown

From brow and eye to tender lip, like cloud on sunlit down,

So glad this soul of youth, I had not known it for my own.

"Send forth," it cried, "thy new-born grief to walk the world with me,

Nor bind it captive to thy breast, a slave that would be free;

If but it followeth where I go, all shall be well with thee.

"Thou mad'st of me a sorrow once, when I was rath and fair;

Thou mak'st of me a sorrow now that whitens all thine hair,

Because, deep-searching in thy heart, thou find'st I dwell not there.

"My spirit is about thee still: thou callest, and I rise.

Despair shall conquer not while thou beneath these spirit eyes

Walk pure the dark ways of the earth when all its daylight dies.

"Thou saw'st me go in anguish once: I come once more to trace

If yet thine heart may courage draw from looking on my face;

For sorrow on the front of youth it hath a strange dead grace.

"I would have made a lovely life for thee, but all in vain;
And still I feel—a spirit now—the stirrings of thy pain:
I am the only grief of thine shall ever come again.

"Thy late-born woes have followed me, but all their tears lie shed:
The grace of Heaven their sobbing stills; and to a restful bed
One after other forth they go with a most silent tread."

The gentle spirit turned and stole with noiseless foot away:
A sudden sunbeam cleaved the sky with a quick upward ray;
The shadows passed from earth and heart, and once more it was day.

So now amid the deepening glooms I sit and muse no more,
But set the captive sorrow free, and, throwing wide life's door,
See it tread the quiet footsteps of the sorrows gone before.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE.

IN 1793, England declared war against the French Republic, and on the 14th of July, Lord Howe, only twelve months before appointed Vice-Admiral of England on the death of Lord Rodney, set sail from St. Helen's with twenty-three sail of the line, in two divisions. The old admiral's orders were to prevent the junction of the fleets of Brest with those of L'Orient and Rochefort, and to intercept, if possible, either the Jamaica, Lisbon, or American convoys.

Lord Howe, generally known to his sailors by the nickname of "Black Dick," from his dark complexion, and also from a sooty foreign mezotint of himself that hung in his state cabin, had seen much service. He had begun life under Anson; he had distinguished himself in the West Indies; at the disastrous affair at Quiberon Bay he had fought like one of Homer's heroes to cover the retreating troops; he had helped to raise the siege of Gibraltar, when Elliot had long held the rock against enormous odds; he had all but destroyed Cherbourg; lastly, he had done brave duty in America, and finally returned home to serve his country, under Pitt, as one of the most conscientious First Lords ever known. Worn by long vigils and fatigue of brain and sinew, buffeted by the storms of many oceans, an old man of sixty-nine, gouty and longing for the quiet of home, Lord Howe was still the old sea lion, determined to do his duty, eager to fight, and resolved to beat. From the middle of July to the end of December, Lord Howe remained at sea, tormented by constant gales, which crippled his half worn-out ships, and only relieved by an occasional glimpse of the enemy. Time after time, to the old warrior's infinite mortification, he had to put back into Torbay to refit his disabled

vessels. He was strongly opposed to the system of blockade in all weathers, considering it left the blockading ships in a debilitated condition to resist the enemy's fleet fresh from its long holiday; he thought it disheartening to the men and costly to the nation. The English people are as impatient of suspense, as the Romans were of the cautious policy of Fabius. The merchants were satisfied so the French privateers were sealed up in port, and their own convoys could pass up and down the Channel; but the mob wanted a heavy blow struck. They complained that Howe was getting old and timid; they sneered at the perpetual returns to port. The wits grew cruel in their desire to appear clever. The favourite joke was that Caesar's great despatch was contained in three words—"Veni, vidi, vici," but that of Howe's might be written in one—"Vidi"—which was heartless enough; but Mr. Pitt, inflexible, with that arrogant nose of his sniffing the air, would listen to no complaints against the old sailor. He knew his man. The truth was, Howe did not want to bar the Frenchman's door; he wanted him, on the contrary, to come out, so that he might smash him. His scout frigates could report the slightest movement at Brest or Rochefort; he would then slip the leashes of his hounds, and dash from Torbay upon the foe. Still the vulgar cry was that Howe was worn out, and that the shelf was a better place for him now than the seaman's berth. The opposition newspapers, eager for Fox and Lord North, were all for putting Howe among the yellow (superannuated) admirals.

On May 2, 1794, Lord Howe left St. Helen's, and put to sea with twenty-two sail of the line and six frigates; his two vice-admirals being Hood and Graves; his rear-admirals, Pasley, Caldwell, Bowyer, and Gardner. At the Lizard, Howe despatched Rear-Admiral Montague with a detached squadron (not included in the above number) of six ships of the line and four frigates to attend the convoys, in the parallel of Cape Finisterre. Howe's main fleet then pushed on for Ushant.

On the deck of the Charlotte, watching the minutest manœuvre of the vessels, marking even a neglected rope or an ill-cut sail, was constantly seen the tall, dark, stern, hard-featured old admiral, who seemed so shy and cold and severe and reserved to those who did not know his real warmth of heart and his kind and benevolent disposition. The foxes soon began to show, and the scent ran high. The stars were in favourable conjunction for England. Three French frigates were first seen lurking about the western entrance of Brest. Every eye was soon on the alert, from the admiral's to the smallest powder-monkey's, eager as fox-hunters for the thrilling cry of "Stole away." Three reconnoitring frigates came back to the hero in the evening, and reported that one French ship of the line, two frigates, and two brigs, had been seen at anchor in Cameret Bay, and that twenty-two large vessels were huddled together inside the Goulet. The weather continued vexa-

tiously foggy and blowing. The fleet continued cruising southward of Ushant, to try and intercept the great convoy expected from North America and the West Indies. On the 29th, being close in with Ushant, the admiral sent two frigates, the *Latona* and *Phaeton*, covered by the *Leviathan* and *Cæsar*, through the *Trône* passage to look into Brest. They looked in boldly, but to their vexation discovered the French fleet had gone. An American vessel soon reported that they had sailed on the 17th—twenty-four ships of the line and ten frigates—their object being to guard the valuable West India homeward-bound convoy. On that day, two French corvettes—the *Républicain* (eighteen) and the *Inconnu* (twelve)—steered towards the fleet, mistaking it for their own. They were instantly taken and destroyed, as there was no time to send them into an English port. The admiral, having thus bagged his first birds, calmly and confidently stood under easy sail to the northward, being sure that the enemy's chief station would be between the parallels of forty-five degrees and forty-seven degrees thirty minutes. On the morning of the 28th, the advance frigates saw several French ships far to the south-east, the wind then blowing stiff from the south-west.

The enemy was watched during that May night, and at daybreak he hove larger, the wind being still fresh from the south-south-west, and a head sea on from the southward. The fleet was then put on the larboard tack, in order to get a few shots at the enemy's rear. A few random long shots were fired in this way. The French then, in imitation of us, wore their van in succession. About ten o'clock he hauled to the wind, and opened fire on the *Cæsar*, *Queen*, *Russell*, and other vessels in our front, trying to disable them, and, by a blow on the head, to stun us and check our pursuit.

The centre of the British fleet drawing fast up with the van, the signal was repeatedly made for the *Cæsar*, leading the line and then under treble-reefed topsails and foresail, to make more sail. In letting the third reef out, her main-topsail split, and it became necessary to bend another. But, as she did not set her mainsail, the centre and rear of the fleet were obliged to shorten sail; and the *Cæsar* dropped to leeward for want of sufficient headway.

The chase continued all day, the French edging down shyly to random-shot distance, then hauling the wind, and firing as they drew ahead. Lord Howe, fearing his van might suffer from their scattered but constantly renewed fire, thought fit to tack the fleet in succession, in order to drive through some part of the enemy's squadron to windward. At noon, the signals for which Howe was anxious were made in the lulls of firing, to charge through the enemy's line. Howe had them now.

Unfortunately the crews were raw, the captains were inexperienced. They betrayed an utter incapacity of manœuvring together, or piercing the enemy's line, and each one engaging his adversary to leeward. Soon after one o'clock,

the *Cæsar*, *Queen*, *Orion*, and *Invisible* were observed to be about on the starboard tack; and the *Cæsar* and *Queen* disappointing the staunch old admiral, Howe, in his prompt and decisive way, instantly tacked his vessel, the *Charlotte* (the tenth from the van), and struck through the French line between the fifth and sixth ships of their rear. He then tacked again, and bore down from to windward, but followed only by the *Bellerophon* and *Leviathan*. The enemy wore in succession, to protect three of their disabled vessels.

Howe in vain signalled to his confused ships to form in line. They came up huddled together, presenting a tempting mark to the French gunners; but the French were quite content to cover their winged vessels, to fire at a safe distance, and to wear to the westward; and Howe, keeping the weathergage, drove steadily after them.

The two next days were foggy; but the wind went down, the head sea abated, and from time to time the enemy's sails showed to the north-west. Soon after noon, on the 31st, the fog melted off, and the twenty-six French vessels were seen to leeward. They were forming in order of battle as Howe's fleet advanced abreast of them; but it was too late to fight comfortably that day, so Howe sent out his observation frigates, and waited anxiously for the warm summer morning that was to welcome June.

June 1st showed the French about three or four miles to leeward, in order of battle, and under easy sail to the westward. Howe, having found his captains unable to pierce the enemy's line and engage to leeward, gave the simpler and more bull-dog order to go straight at their throats; i.e. each ship to steer for and engage the ship opposed to her in the enemy's line, throttle it, and pound it deaf and dumb as soon as possible. Our fleet bore up soon after nine. After a quiet half-hour given the men for breakfast, our fleet bore down on the French as calmly as if our vessels were coming to an anchor.

As the *Charlotte* was advancing towards the French line with a determination to pass through it, it appeared so close and compact that Lord Howe expressed a doubt whether there was room to pass between the *Montagne*, of one hundred and twenty guns, and the *Jacobin*, of eighty, which had stretched partly under the lee of the former, as if afraid of the *Charlotte*'s broadside, thus occupying the place it was intended the *Charlotte* should take. Lord Howe, however, was determined to pass through, or run on board the enemy's flag-ship or the *Jacobin*; on which Bowen, blunt and resolute, called out, "That's right, my lord; the *Charlotte* will make room for herself." On his first appointment to the *Queen Charlotte*, this unpolished but shrewd and clever seaman had been in the habit, in addressing the commander-in-chief, or replying to his questions, of frequently, almost constantly, using the expression "my lord." One day Lord Howe said to him, "Bowen, pray, my good fellow, do give over that eternal 'my

lord,' 'my lord'; don't you know I am called 'Black Dick' in the fleet?"

Just as the Charlotte was closing with the Montagne, Lord Howe, who was himself conning the ship, called out to Bowen to starboard the helm; to which Bowen remarked, that if they did so she would be on board the next ship, the Jacobin: to this his lordship replied, sharply, "What is that to you, sir?" Bowen, a little nettled, said, in an under tone, "D—n me if I care, if you don't; I'll go near enough to singe some of our whiskers."

It was, they say, a sight to remember, to see the old admiral sweeping down on the French line, brushing on the one side the ensign of the flag-ship of Rear-Admiral Villaret Joyeuse, and grazing, on the other hand, with the jib-boom of the Charlotte, the mizen-shrouds of the Jacobin. She would certainly have either sunk or captured the Montagne had not her fore-topmast been shot away. Just as the French admiral's fire had ceased, our main-topmast fell over the side, which gave the Montagne the opportunity of making off to leeward, without the possibility of the Charlotte's following her. The Frenchman's hull was completely damaged; the tremendous broadside poured into her stern as the Charlotte was passing through the line, made a hole large enough, as one of the sailors said, to row the admiral's barge through.

The Defence, Marlborough, Royal George, Queen, and Brunswick were the only English ships that broke the enemy's line in the admiral's grand manner, and engaging the French to leeward. The Gibraltar blundered, and the Cæsar's main-topsail was backed at the very moment the signal for close engagement was abroad. Our ships were old, and many of them bad sailers. The French rear-guard, dreading our charge, closed upon their van in such a compact mass that the captains dared not strike on it; only the admiral and five captains let their ships "make their own way." Some mistook the directions, our signal system being still in its infancy. Others presumed on the conditional order to engage either to windward or leeward, according to circumstances.

Captain G. Berkeley fought the Marlborough like a hero. He engaged the Impétueux for a hot twenty minutes, shot tearing through sails and rigging, crashing through bulwarks and bulkheads, and ripping deck planks, spars, and balustrades. The Impétueux, soon having enough of it, paid round off, and dropped with her bowsprit over the Marlborough's quarter, where she lay exposed to a heavy raking fire, that drove every one from the Frenchman's decks. The sailors of the Marlborough were cool, obedient, brave and frolicsome as boys. Some of the men leaped on board the Frenchman, but were called back.

As one of the sailors was going to leap over, a comrade called after him to take a cutlass. This he refused, saying "he should find one there;" and, on being called back, actually returned with two of the enemy's cutlasses in his hands.

Presently the Frenchman's masts, one after the other, crashed over her side, and Captain Berkeley was wounded.

Lieutenant Monckton now commanded. In his despatch he says:

"At this time we were laying along the Impétueux, within pistol-shot; and, finding that she did not return a gun, and perceiving she was on fire, I ordered our ship to cease firing at her, and suffered them quietly to extinguish the flames, which I could easily have prevented with our musketry. While clearing away the wreck, the rear of the enemy's fleet was coming up, and perceiving that they must range close to us, and being determined never to see the British flag struck, I ordered the men to lie down at their quarters to receive their fire, and to return it afterwards if possible; but, being dismasted, she rolled so deep that our lower-deck ports could not be opened. The event was as I expected; the enemy's rear passed us to leeward very close, and we fairly ran the gauntlet of every ship which could get a gun to bear, but luckily without giving us any shot between wind and water, or killing any men, except two who imprudently disobeyed their officers and got up at their quarters. Two of their ships, which had tacked, now came to windward of us, and gave us their fire, upon which one of their hulks hoisted a national flag, but upon our firing some guns at her she hauled it down again; and a three-decker, having tacked also, stood towards us, with a full intention, I believe, to sink us if possible: the Royal George, however, who I suppose had tacked after her, came up, and, engaging her very closely, carried away her main and mizen masts, and saved the Marlborough from the intended close attack. I then made the signal for assistance on a boat's mast; but this was almost instantly shot away. At five the Aquilon took us in tow, and soon after we joined the fleet."

During the rough time that the Marlborough went through after her fierce duel with the Impétueux, her deadly grapple with the French admiral, and her being battered by half the French fleet, the men on one occasion seeing the captain down, the second lieutenant, Sir Michael Seymour, with his arm shot off, and the old ship riddled and shattered with the unceasing fire, began to grumble, and there was a mutter about surrender; but Lieutenant Monckton, overhearing it, swore that she should never surrender, and that he would nail her colours to the stump of the mast. At this moment a cock, having by the wreck been liberated from his broken coop, suddenly perched himself on the stump of the mainmast, clapped his wings, and crowed aloud; in an instant three hearty cheers rang throughout the ship's company, and there was no more talk of surrender. On the arrival of the ship at Plymouth, the gallant and prophetic cock, that had saved the ship, was given by Captain Berkeley to Lord George Lennox, the governor of the town. The cock lived to a good old age, and, while the Marlborough remained at Plymouth,

was daily visited by parties of the Marlborough's sailors.

The spirit of our seamen was heroic. On board the *Queen* and *Invincible*, the sailors who had their arms taken off in the engagement of the 29th went into the cockpit on the 1st of June, to assist the surgeons and encourage the poor men who were to submit to the same operation, by declaring it was much less painful than it appeared to be, and that they felt no pain from the wounds.

The *Defence*, Captain Gambier, behaved most gallantly, was terribly cut up, and totally dismasted; she was one of the few that passed through the enemy's line, got into the midst of the French ships, and lost her main and mizen masts. At the close of the action, Captain Pakenham, a rattling, good-humoured Irishman, hailed him from the *Invincible*, "Well, Jimmy, I see you are pretty well mauled; but never mind, Jimmy, whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

The *Invincible* (Pakenham) also did bravely, running amuck among the astonished French, and striking with both hands as he ran the gauntlet. Pakenham, having fired away in a very rude style on one of the French men-of-war, and observing they did not answer the compliment in the manner he expected, stopped his fire, and desired to know if the ship had struck. On being answered they had not, he hallooed out, in great rage, "Then, d—n ye, why do you not fire?" Remarking that one of the enemy's ships had shot away the topmasts of one commanded by his particular friend, Pakenham declared with an oath, "I'll pay you for that;" and, bearing down on the Frenchman, he gave him a broadside for the affront offered to his comrade. After the action of the 29th, he sent word to Lord Howe that his men and guns were quite ready for another touch, but they must tow him into the line, for his ship would not stir, and then he would do his duty.

Captain Harvey, in the *Brunswick* (seventy-four) fought the *Vengeur* (seventy-four) with a good-natured courage that nothing could quell. Lord Howe had placed Harvey's ship next his own, as a token of his esteem. One of the bower anchors of the *Brunswick* being shot away, the cable ran out its whole length, and the ship, in sounding, fell close alongside of the *Vengeur*, still full of fight. The brave captain of the *Brunswick* received two shots in his arm before he left the deck to have it amputated, in consequence of a third wound. His brother, Captain Henry Harvey, in the *Ramilies*, seeing the *Brunswick* beset by three French ships at one time, bore down between the enemy and his brother, to draw off their fire. A fine bit of sailor's dry humour and naïveté was shown during this fight. The *Brunswick* had a large figure-head of the duke, with a laced hat on. The hat was struck off by a shot in the battle. The crew of the *Brunswick*, thinking it a degradation that a prince of that house should continue to be uncovered in face of the enemy, sent a deputation to the quarter-deck

to request that Captain Harvey would be pleased to order his servant to give them his laced cocked-hat to supply the loss. The good-humoured captain complied, and the carpenter nailed it on the duke's head, where it remained till the battle was finished. The *Ramilies* poured such a revengeful and crushing fire into the *Vengeur*, that she went to the bottom with three hundred and twenty men, just as the battle was over, and her officers were removing her prisoners to the *Ramilies* and the *Brunswick*.

When the *Sans Pareil* was taken possession of, Captain Troubridge was found on board as a prisoner, having been captured in the *Castor*, when in charge of the Newfoundland convoy. On the morning of the 1st of June, the French officers, seeing the British fleet under easy sail, going parallel to the French line, taunted him by saying "there will be no fighting to-day: your admiral will not venture down." "Wait a little," said Troubridge; "English sailors never like to fight with empty stomachs. I see the signal flying for all hands to breakfast; after which, take my word for it, they will pay you a visit." When the *Sans Pareil* had got enough of the battle, and was prepared to surrender, her captain sent down to request Troubridge would come upon deck and do him the honour to strike her colours: an honour which he thought fit to decline.

The *Audacious*, a small seventy-four (Captain Parker), impinging on the *Révolutionnaire*, a large three-decker, as a smartly shot small marble drives a big "bonze" out of the ring, struck it out of the line, and stuck to her enemy all night and all the next day, keeping up a pertinacious fight, and clinging to her like a terrier to a mad bull. Captain Parker in his despatch says:

"At this time his mizen-mast was gone by the board; his lower-yards and main-top-sail-yard shot away: he fell athwart our bows; but we separated without being entangled; he then directed his course before the wind. When the enemy separated from athwart our bows, the company of his Majesty's ship under my command gave three cheers, from the idea, taken from the people quartered forward, that his colours were struck. This I cannot myself take upon me to say, though I think it likely, from his situation obliging him to pass through or near to our line; but certain it is he was completely beaten: his fire slackened towards the latter part of the action, and the last broadside (the ships' sides almost touching each other) he sustained without returning more than the fire of two or three guns."

At daybreak the people of the *Audacious* saw, to their bitter disgust, nine sail of the enemy's ships three miles to windward. Thus she lost her prize, and, disabled as her rigging was, she would certainly have fallen into the hands of the French, had not some friendly rain and fog spread between them, and enabled the *Audacious* to slip back to Plymouth.

All this time the old admiral stood upon the poop of the *Queen Charlotte*, undaunted.

such a whirlwind of cannon shot and musket bullets that it seemed only a miracle could preserve him from death. All around him guns were thundering, fire flaming, masts falling as thick as trees in a forest when the woodmen are clearing, men were dying at his very feet. Still the old lion held on to his purpose, and struck hard at the *Montagne*, a ship eight hundred tons bigger than his own. It was only an unlucky shot, taking away the topmast of the admiral's vessel, that prevented his carrying the enemy, after having long before beaten her guns dumb.

Our victory had been dearly bought. The number of killed in the British fleet was two hundred and seventy-nine; of wounded, eight hundred and seventy-seven: making a total of one thousand one hundred and fifty-six. In the six of the enemy's captured ships the killed were six hundred and ninety; wounded, five hundred and eighty: total, one thousand two hundred and seventy; besides three hundred and twenty who went down in the *Vengeur*. The number of prisoners removed is stated at two thousand three hundred; the total number in the six captured ships could not be less than five thousand. The six prizes were the *Le Juste* (eighty), *Sans Pareil* (eighty), *L'America* (seventy-four), *L'Achille* (seventy-four), *Le Northumberland* (seventy-four), and the *L'Impétueux* (seventy-four). The French eighty-gun ships were all ten feet longer than our first-rates, and some inches wider; the whole French fleet had four hundred and seventy guns more than our own, and those of a much larger calibre. Their ships were many of them new; ours weather-beaten, and, for the most part, half worn out. Lord Howe has been much blamed for letting five of the disabled French ships escape—some under sprit-sails and others by towing—when, with dash and energy, they might have been captured, and the defeat made more crushing and final. Sir John Barrow, Howe's biographer, confesses that five flag officers (at that time lieutenants in the English squadron) gave their opinion that the crippled ships might have been and ought to have been captured.

The blame is generally thrown on Sir Roger Curtis, who, seeing our vessels scattered, seems to have feared a renewed charge from the nine least injured French vessels. But there were still eight English seventy-fours with scarcely a scratch on them, and one of these, the *Thunderer*, had not had a man killed nor wounded. The simple truth is, that Lord Howe (sixty-nine years old) was physically and mentally worn out with his three days' fighting, and had no stamina left to organise a hot and continued pursuit.

The two next days were spent in repairing rigging, bandaging wounded masts, removing the five thousand prisoners, and taking the six prizes in tow. Fair weather smiled on the victorious fleet, and light western breezes wafted it home to Spithead. Some of the vessels were sent to Plymouth under Admiral

Graves to be refitted. Crowds of people hurried to Portsmouth to see the captured ships arrive, dragged at the heels of our battered vessels. Shortly after the return of the *Charlotte* to Portsmouth, Lord Howe sent for the first lieutenant, Larcom. "Mr. Larcom," he said, sternly, "your conduct in the action has been such that it is necessary you should leave this ship." Larcom, who was as brave as his admiral, a good officer and seaman, was thunder-struck, and, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed, "What have I done? Why am I to leave the ship? I have done my duty to the utmost of my power." "Very true, sir," said Lord Howe; "but leave this ship you must—and I have great pleasure in presenting you with this commission as commander (of some other ship) for your conduct on the late occasion."

Some time after the battle, a deputation of the petty officers and seamen requested Bowen to ask Lord Howe if they might have the gratification of congratulating his lordship on the victory he had gained, and of thanking him for having led them so gloriously into battle. On receiving them on the quarter-deck, Lord Howe himself being on the front of the poop, was so affected that he could only say, with a faltering voice, and his eyes glistening with tears, "No, no, I thank *you*; it is *you*, my brave lads—it is *you*, not I, that have conquered." The honest and blunt Bowen, in telling this to a friend, said, "I could myself have cried most heartily to see the veteran hero so affected."

Haughty, inflexible, and cold as the Howes were always considered, the admiral well earned his honourable name of "the sailor's friend." After the engagement, his secretary says he was accustomed to go down below and cheer the wounded men, sitting by their hammocks, and ordering the surgeon to use his wines and live stock at his own discretion.

Lord Howe gave some offence to the fleet by what was considered the unprecedented and unjust omission in his despatches of the names of thirteen of his captains. Howe thought it invidious to particularise. Captain Molloy, of the *Cæsar*, much to Howe's vexation, demanded a court-martial, which pronounced his personal courage unimpeachable, but dismissed him from the command of the *Cæsar*. Collingwood, who was violent when he felt injustice, was captain of the *Barfleur*; his commander, Rear-Admiral Bowyer, being wounded an hour after the battle began, he had fought the ship the whole day, and yet his name was omitted in the *Gazette*. He succeeded, however, a few years afterwards, in obtaining the medal for this victory. After the gallant action of Sir John Jervis, off Cape St. Vincent, he was told by the admiral that he was set down for one of the medals to be distributed on that occasion; his answer was, he could not accept of one while that for the 1st of June was withheld. "I feel," said he, "that I was then improperly passed over, and to receive such a distinction now would be to acknowledge the propriety of

that injustice." Soon after this, the *two* medals were transmitted to Collingwood by Lord Spencer, with a civil apology for some delay in sending that for the 1st of June. Nine captains were made rear-admirals of the blue; Graves and Hood were created barons; and Bowyer, Gardner, and Pasley, baronets.

The nation was brimming over with joy, pride, and gratitude—the king more than any one. He was always fond of the Howes, and claimed them as distant kinsmen. He wrote the following autograph letter to the earl's sister:

"Windsor, 11th of June, 1794.

"Mrs. Howe's zeal for the great cause in which this country is engaged, added to her becoming ardour for the glory of her family, must make her feel with redoubled joy the glorious news brought by Sir Roger Curtis; she will, I hope, be satisfied now that *Earl Richard* has, with twenty-five sail of the line, attacked twenty-six of the enemy, taken six, and sunk two: besides, it is not improbable that some of the disabled ships of the enemy may not be able to reach their own shore. I own I could not refrain from expressing my sentiments on the occasion, but will not detain her by adding more.

(Signed)

"GEORGE R."

Howe was promised a blue ribbon. He received the order of the Garter, and declined a marquissate. His sprightly daughter, writing to her sister, Lady Altamont, says:

"It would amuse you to hear the titles which the officers wish my father to have, as they choose him to be a marquis; though some of the sailors when disputing on this point the other day, one of them was heard to say, 'A marquis, you blockhead, the king must make him one of the blood royal!'"

Howe received the freedom of the City and of several of the companies in gold boxes, and he obtained the thanks of both Houses of Parliament. The men who did the real work got their usual halfpence—about three guineas each. About ten thousand pounds was subscribed off-hand at Lloyd's, for the widows, children, and wounded sailors.

On the 20th of June, the king, queen, and three princesses came to Portsmouth, and went in a boat procession to dine on board the Queen Charlotte. On the quarter-deck the king presented Lord Howe with a sword set with diamonds, and a gold chain and medal. Sir Roger Curtis and Admirals Hood and Gardner also received gold chains. All the sailors of the Queen Charlotte requested to touch the sword, and it was then sent round the whole fleet for the crews to see it. At dinner the king himself proposed the toast:

"May the great admiral long command the Queen Charlotte, and may she long be an example to future fleets."

The old admiral did not keep much longer at sea. He lived to praise Nelson, Duncan, Bridport, and Jervis, to rejoice at the battle of the Nile,

and by good sense and kindness to suppress the dangerous mutinies of 1797. He died of gout in 1799.

MABEL'S PROGRESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE."

CHAPTER VIII. EXPLANATORY.

JACK's unremitting exertions, guided by the practical common sense and single-mindedness which he inherited from his mother, had succeeded in discovering Walter Charlewood's whereabouts. The clue afforded by poor Corda's letter, which led to the detection of her brother's anonymous calumnies, had set Jack thinking of Alfred Trescott. It had not been difficult to discover, on inquiry, that Alfred had been a frequent associate and companion of Walter during a great part of the time that the Charlewoods had passed in London.

"The idea of seeking any information about my brother from young Trescott never entered my head," said Clement, when Jack uttered his opinion that it might be well to set a watch on Alfred, as a means of tracing the missing Walter. "I did not even know that they had met since we came to town."

"No; I dare say not," said Jack, "but that is not hard to account for, is it? Your brother knew pretty well, I suppose, that that double-distilled young scoundrel was not exactly the sort of companion you would approve of for him."

"True. And I had often warned Walter against associating with him in days gone by. My brother is so easily influenced by those around him."

"Exactly so. And you may depend that Trescott impressed upon your brother the desirableness of not mentioning his name to you. But I have a strong notion that if anybody in London knows where your brother is at this minute, Alfred Trescott is the man; and as it clearly would be of no use to question that very amiable young gentleman, I think the best way will be to watch where he goes to, and whom he sees. We shall find out something so, depend on it."

In the pursuance of this line of conduct, Jack found an invaluable ally in old Jerry Shaw, who threw himself into the business with great zeal. By his assistance, and that of Lingo, with whom Jerry said the whole credit of the discovery ought rightfully to rest, Jack soon found out that young Trescott had been seen with a gentleman answering to Walter Charlewood's description in a tavern not far from the neighbourhood inhabited by the fair Mrs. Hutchins. That lady, with a rat-like instinct, began to divine that misfortune and disgrace were hanging over the head of her "poetical" and high-minded young friend, Alfred Trescott, and she consequently became very pliant in Jack's hands, imparting a great deal that she

knew to Alfred's disadvantage, and a vast deal more that she did *not* know, with her accustomed florid eloquence. The truth was, that Mrs. Hutchins (to whom Jerry Shaw presented Jack as a cousin of "Miss Bell," and at the same time a friend of Mr. Charlewood) began to have sundry misgivings as to the policy of her violent animosity to Clement and the scandal she had spoken of him to Betty. If Mr. Charlewood were still on good terms with Mabel, it might be no passport to the favour of the latter to abuse him; and a good or bad word from Miss Bell was important to a person employed as Mrs. Hutchins was in the Thespian Theatre. By Clement's consent, Jack and Mr. Shaw undertook to induce Walter to return home with them, thinking that a stranger's face would be less likely to startle the truant than the sight of his brother arriving unexpectedly. They accordingly watched Alfred enter and leave the tavern, and immediately on his departure made their way to Walter, with what result the reader knows.

It is needless to speak of Mrs. Charlewood's joy over her re-found boy, or of the relief of mind to Clement and Penelope at finding their brother alive and safe, although looking broken and abject. For the first two days after his return home, Walter did not recover either his health or his self-possession sufficiently to face Clement and Penelope. He shut himself in his own room, on the excuse—but too well founded—of indisposition, and refused to see any one except his mother, who left her own sick-bed to tend him. But by degrees, as he became aware of the forbearing kindness which actuated all around him, a spring of good feeling and gratitude was touched in his weak but not wholly depraved nature, and he began to come amongst the family again, and even to make some approach towards asking pardon for the suffering he had caused them, and to promise amendment. In his heart, spite of all he had said to Alfred Trescott, he was inexpressibly thankful to have been compelled, as it were, to return home without making the first advances towards a reconciliation himself. He told himself and told his mother that within four-and-twenty hours of the time when Jack surprised him in a drunken slumber on the tavern bed, he should have been aboard an emigrant ship, and on his way to Australia. But at the bottom of his conscience he well knew that it would not have been so. Clement had one interview with his brother alone, and what passed between them he never fully disclosed to any one; but the two chief points spoken of were the discovery of Alfred's secret and malignant enmity, and the project discussed between Clement and his sister Penelope, of applying to old Stephens on Walter's behalf. Walter caught at the idea of going abroad, and even added a postscript to Clement's letter, begging the old clerk (in a strain of very unwonted candour and humility) to hold out a helping hand to him, and promising solemnly not to dishonour his recommendation.

To Jack Walton, as he called himself, the whole family were extremely grateful, and the singular circumstances of his first introduction to them made an intimacy arise between them with peculiar rapidity. "But, after all, we owe it to Mabel Earnshaw, first and foremost, that I have got my boy back again," said Mrs. Charlewood, staunchly. She had never relinquished her old liking for Mabel, although the fact of the latter's having gone on the stage continued to be, theoretically, an unforgiven sin. It was at Mabel's intercession, and in deference to Mabel's pleadings, that Corda was spared any questioning as to what she knew of her brother's anonymous writings. The fact that the child had written the note to Mr. McCulloch, justifying Clement against the evil that had been said of him, could not be doubted; and once on the right track, a thousand pieces of internal evidence came to light, all showing plainly that Alfred Trescott, and he only, had been Clement's anonymous maligner. At first Clement had been utterly unable to conceive any sufficient motive for so persistent and bitter a hatred; but old Jerry Shaw, piecing together what he had observed for himself of Alfred's pursuit of Mabel, and what he had gathered from Corda's artless talk about Mr. Charlewood's attachment to her dear "Miss Bell," had arrived at a pretty accurate conclusion on the subject, which conclusion he communicated to Jack, who in turn communicated it to Clement.

"The ruffian was jealous of you, it seems," said Jack. "He had the outrageous audacity to aspire to my cousin Mabel, and hated you, as I suppose he would have hated any one who was in a position to have the chance of being on an intimate footing in Mrs. Saxelby's house."

"Then your cousin never—" Clement stopped abruptly.

"Never thought of *him*? Good God, Charlewood, is it possible that you, who have known Mabel so well and so long, can ask such a question?"

Jack spoke with indignant warmth, but Clement was so far from being offended by it, that he shook him heartily by the hand, and said, humbly, that he begged pardon, that the idea *was* monstrous, and that he ought to have known better.

It has been stated that, at Mabel's intercession, no steps were taken which could make Corda aware of the discovery that had been made. But Jack insisted upon enlightening Lady Popham as to the true character of her protégé without delay, and volunteered to accompany Clement on the visit which was to be made for that purpose.

They had a terrible time of it with my lady. For nearly an hour she persisted in disbelieving all their statements, called them vile calumniators and treacherous scandal-mongers, abused them in very choice Italian, and flounced up and down her drawing-room in a whirlwind of wrath. Then suddenly, and quite without any preparation, she veered round to a firm and

rooted conviction of Alfred's baseness, and wept gingerly behind her point-lace-bordered handkerchief, and bemoaned herself, and reproached him, and told the two bewildered young men that, from childhood upwards, she had been an impulsive, sensitive creature, liable to be the victim of strong emotion, and totally deficient in British stolidity and self-repression. But there was, under all the froth of her demonstrative affections, a substratum of feeling in the kindly old woman, which feeling had been deeply wounded by the disclosure of Alfred's utter worthlessness. It was not merely the mortification of finding that she had been utterly fooled and deceived from the beginning—though that mortification was keen to a person who, like Lady Popham, prided herself on the acuteness of her judgment—but there was real regret for her protégé's unworthy conduct, and real compassion for the innocent little girl in whom Jack and Clement earnestly tried to interest her. "Poverina, poverina!" cried my lady, wiping her eyes. "C'est touchant. C'est vraiment touchant. The innocent little fool. But that Alfred—viper! However, my dear people, we must hush it up. No esclandre. For Heaven's sake, no esclandre! You English people always put everything in the newspapers. Now, if this story is put in the newspapers, I shall, tout simplement, expire!"

She was assured that there was no intention of putting the story into the newspapers; and then, after a minute or two's reflection, she undertook to get rid of her latest and most unfortunate speculation in *geniuses*, by the simple process of running away from him! "I shall go to Vienna," said my lady—"I shall go to Vienna, and leave a—a—note for that scelerato—how handsome he is! Quel dommage! And meanwhile, until I can start, I shall take to my bed, and tell my people not to let him pass. A few lines, you know, and—a—cheque, I think. Oh, of course it's wrong, I know; highly immoral. Don't preach to me, I implore. It *never* was of the least use to preach to me. But the fact is, I *was* the means of dragging this *birbante* out of his obscurity, and giving him hopes and tastes and aspirations that—Ah, Dio buono! Yes, yes, there must be a cheque, and meanwhile I shall go to bed."

Not the least gratified person at the return of Walter Charlewood, and the clearing away of the cloud which had hung over Clement, was Mr. McCulloch; and before Jack left London to return home, his friend and patron resolved to give a farewell dinner ostensibly in his honour, to which he invited Clement and Penelope Charlewood. "I wonder," the old Scotchman had said to Jack, "I wonder whether your cousin and Mrs. Saxelby would honour me with their presence! I have had the pleasure of calling on them with you, but I don't like to seem intrusive. Public people, celebrities like Miss Bell, get worried a good deal in that way, I dare say."

Jack, after a word or two with his cousin,

had undertaken to say that she would be very happy to accept Mr. McCulloch's proffered hospitality; and thus it came to pass that the invitations to dinner at the Hawthorns included Mabel and her mother.

CHAPTER IX. IS IT TOO LATE?

MR. McCULLOCH'S dinner-party consisted of Clement and Penelope Charlewood, Mrs. Saxelby, Mabel, and Jack, and a wealthy picture-dealer, whose acquaintance Mr. McCulloch had thought might be useful to the young painter. The presence of this stranger prevented any allusion to the recent events which had so nearly concerned all the rest of the party, and directed the conversation to general topics. The host exerted himself successfully to make the evening pass pleasantly, and Penelope Charlewood quite captivated the old Scotchman by her keen sharp wit and shrewd sayings. It was long since there had been so bright a light in poor Penny's eye, or so genial a smile on her lips. And the trouble she had passed through just served to soften her biting humour, and to give a touch of gentleness to her manner. Mrs. Saxelby, in the place of honour at Mr. McCulloch's right hand, was all suavity, and Jack was in his usual state of high spirits and unclouded good humour. Mabel and Clement were the most silent of the party. They had met but once since their interview at the little house in Barnsbury, and then their meeting had taken place in the midst of the excitement consequent on Jack's discovery of Walter. Both were silent, but in Mabel's face there shone the reflexion of an inward happiness, while Clement was grave and preoccupied. He reproached himself for the words he had been hurried into saying. His feeling might have been rendered by the old lines,

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.

And, in his judgment, honour required him to refrain from a suit which could result only in a humiliating repulse, or—he scarcely admitted the alternative—in tying Mabel to his fallen fortunes. But yet as he sat near to her, listening to her rare sweet words, watching the quiet modest grace of her movements, and the pure light that shone in her clear eyes, he felt that she was so dear to him, that all life without her looked blank and grey. Nevertheless, he "loved honour more," and made up his mind to endure his sorrow manfully.

The preceding evening had been the last of the season at the Royal Thespian Theatre; consequently the popular actress was free to enjoy the sweet breath of Mr. McCulloch's flowers, and to sit in his pretty garden in the August twilight, instead of hurrying away to her professional duties. The host had had a table brought on to the lawn after dinner, and sat sipping his wine in the pleasant air, with much gusto.

"It's a better smell than the gas-lamps—ch,

Miss Bell?" said he, observing Mabel with a bunch of carnations in her hand.

"I dare say Miss Bell likes the gas, too," said the picture-dealer, "or, at all events, the incense that mounts to her nostrils with the flare of the float. The breath of public applause is very sweet."

"I think," said Mabel, with a shy smile, "that the flowers are better."

"Come, Mabel," cried Penelope, "be honest; I used to cite you as one of the few truth-telling people I knew. Tell the truth, now, you *do* love the incense of praise and applause. We all love it. It's only the folks who can't get any that are allowed to pretend to despise it, and that is not your case, at all events. You *do* think the incense a sweet thing."

"Yes," answered Mabel, slowly; and then, after a minute's pause, she laid one hand on Penelope's shoulder, and gently touching her lips with the rich fragrant carnation that she held in the other, added, in a low voice, "but, still I think the flowers are better."

"One can't live upon perfume, though, Mabel," said Jack, laughingly, "any more than one can live upon—upon love or moonshine, both very charming things in their way! Whereas the public approval translates itself into very tangible coin of the realm."

"Jack talking worldliness and common sense is a delicious spectacle," cried Mabel, "when I know so well that he would not allow all the bright gold that ever was minted to weigh against the lightest wish of any one he really loved!" Looking up, she caught Clement's eyes fixed upon her, and dropped her own with a bright flush.

"Mrs. Saxelby," said Mr. McCulloch, "before it gets too dark to see it, will you walk round my little place? I have some rather choice shrubs down yonder, and ferns—I don't know whether you care about ferns—"

"I do!" said Penelope; "may I come too?"

"Of course, my dear Miss Charlewood. Allow me. There. Now, Charlewood, if you will give Miss Bell your arm. You two fellows are going to have cigars, I see." And Mr. McCulloch walked away with Mrs. Saxelby and Penelope, leaving Clement and Mabel to follow. Jack and the picture-dealer remained to smoke under the verandah.

Clement stood for a moment by Mabel's side.

"Will you come?" he said, hesitatingly.

She touched his offered arm lightly with her hand, and they walked on together. For some paces they proceeded in silence; then Mabel spoke:

"I am so, so glad that your trouble about Walter is all at an end."

"Thank you. I hope, if we can get him abroad, he may do well yet."

"And I am so very glad, too, that—that—the calumnies against you have been traced to their source. When Jack told me of the letters, I was so indignant—so grieved!"

"You are very good."

There was another pause. The hand on his arm trembled as Mabel said, at length,

"Have you not forgiven me, Clement?"

It was the first time she had ever called him by that name, and the sound of it, uttered by her voice, thrilled him to the heart. He would have given the world to take her in his arms and fold her in the shelter of his great love. He would have given the world, but not what he prized above all—his self-respect. No; he loved her so much, she was so dear to him, *because* he "loved honour more." He answered, steadily:

"I told you, Mabel, that I had nothing to forgive you. What pain you once caused me is past and over, and was given unwillingly."

"God knows it was given *unwittingly*. But—"

"Let me say one word; it shall be the last with which I will trouble you about my own private feelings. The other day, when you came to our house on an errand of kindness and friendship, I was hurried into saying words that should not have been spoken. I had been harassed out of all self-command, and the unexpected sight of you opened an old wound."

"You said what you did not mean, then?" she murmured, half withdrawing her hand from its resting-place on his arm.

"No, Mabel. Even to spare you pain, I cannot tell you a lie. I meant then what I mean now, and what I shall mean all my life long. But, nevertheless, I should not have uttered such words to you. To what end should I have uttered them? Forget them, Mabel, and be my friend again, as you were in the old days, if you can."

"But I cannot."

"I am grieved to hear it, but it must be borne like the rest."

"Do you know why I cannot be your friend again, as in the old days? Clement, Clement, you called me proud. I believe I am so by nature. My pride once hurt you, and, perhaps, blinded me to my own feelings. I do not know. I was very young. I had never thought of—of—your seeking me in that way, and I had received a warning which cut my girlish spirit to the quick, that I must not aspire to the honour you might be led to offer me. But, Clement—dear Clement—I lay down before you my old pride—I throw it at your feet. Those words, that you bid me to forget, filled me with joy and gratitude. I have been learning all this time—learning by absence—by the jealous pang at my heart when I thought you cared for another—by the yearning to help and comfort you in your great trouble—I have been learning that I love you, Clement—that I love you very dearly."

For one moment, in the ecstasy of hearing her speak those words, he caught her to his breast and kissed her. But almost directly he released her from his clasp, and stepped apart from her.

"Noblest, dearest Mabel," he said, "I have no right to take advantage of your generous

goodness. What should I be—think, what should I be—if I could avail myself of your sweet compassion to bind you—you with your brilliant prospects—to a man so poor, so burdened, as I am?"

Mabel had hidden her face in her hands. She raised it slowly now, and it looked pale and white in the gathering dusk.

"You would show yourself to be strong and good," she answered with a quivering voice. "You would prove that you know how small and poor all worldly considerations are in the presence of a true love."

"All mere worldly considerations, Mabel. But there are others which—Ah, think what it must be for me to plead thus against myself!" He broke off abruptly, and pressed his hands to his head.

"And think," she answered, "what it must be for me to plead for myself! But, Clement, be sure—nay, I believe you *are* sure—that if I had not thought you spoke the full and simple truth when you told me that you loved me still, there is no power on earth which could have made me speak the words I have spoken!" The old haughty curve on the delicate mouth, the old proud drooping of the eyes! He might have measured the depth of her love for him by the struggle that her pride was making to subdue all manifestation of tenderness. But in an instant she went on impulsively, "What is money, or what money can bring, between you and me? You would have bestowed your great wealth upon me, a poor penniless girl, because you loved me. Did the sacrifice appear very great?"

"You know, Mabel, that there would have been no sacrifice. If I could have been made ruler of the world, my highest pride would have been to call you my wife."

"And yet you cannot credit me with feeling in that way! You talk of my brilliant prospects! In another year I shall, if my health is spared, have earned money enough to achieve one great purpose of my life, a provision for Dooley's education, and a sum sufficient (with what she has already) to provide a comfortable subsistence for my mother. Those are my 'brilliant prospects.' I do not despise them. I am glad and grateful to have succeeded so far. But when once that is done, what are the 'brilliant prospects' before me? And you? Shall you be happy? Ah, a man's love is not as a woman's! He can *bestow* royally, but he cannot be generous enough to *accept*!" Tears were falling down her cheeks as she spoke, and she turned away to hide them.

"Mabel! Mabel!" shouted a voice at a little distance, and in a moment Jack came running towards them. He was breathless and agitated. "Mabel," he cried, "they are looking for you. Jerry Shaw is here. He went first to Desmond Lodge, and not finding you, came on here. He is come on a sad errand. Poor little Corda Treseott, they think, is dying, and she has been begging to see you and Mr. Charlewood. Will you go to her?"

Mabel flew along the garden path to the lawn, where a little group of persons was standing. Jerry Shaw was in the midst, leaning on his stick, and with a face full of woe. Lingo was not with him. When he saw Mabel and Clement, he advanced towards them hurriedly. "She's going, the darling," he said. "The sweet young little angel is ready to take flight from among us. Will you come to her, Miss Bell? It's for the last time. She'll never trouble you nor anybody else any more." Old Jerry wiped his eyes on his checked handkerchief. "He wouldn't leave her a minute," he went on; "there he lies stretched by her bedside, and it's hard to get him away, even to take his food."

"Her father?" asked Mrs. Saxelby.

"No, ma'am. My dog Lingo. Her father's a poor demented kind of creature. He does nothing but moan and bother her. She went to sleep this afternoon, and woke up about an hour ago, and says she, 'Mr. Shaw, I know I shall not be here very long, and I'd be very thankful if I could see my dear Miss Mabel before I go away, and Mr. Charlewood too. I want to speak to him. Would you ask them to come to me?' And when I promised that I would set off to find the two of ye that minute, she just gave a smile that seemed to light up the room, so bright it was, and laid down again as quiet as a lamb. I have a cab waiting here at the gate, Miss Bell."

Mabel and Clement followed the old man to the vehicle, and in a few minutes they were driving at a rapid pace towards Blackfriars.

CHAPTER X. CALM.

As they went along through the rattling streets, old Jerry related to them at intervals, and in a broken manner, how Corda had been found insensible on the floor three days ago; how they had thought her dead at first, for that her mouth and clothes were stained with blood; how, when she had come to herself again, she had merely declared that she had hurt herself in falling over a footstool; and how she had been in bed ever since, and growing rapidly weaker. "I knew in my heart," said Jerry, "that she wasn't very long for this world, but I little thought it would be so soon. In these three days her strength has been going, going, like snow-flakes melting in the sun. And I believe, on my soul, that that brother of hers has been murdering her."

"You don't suppose," cried Clement, hastily, "that he used any violence to the child?"

"I don't suppose he took a cudgel and knocked her brains out," said Jerry, nodding his head portentously, "but I do suppose that there are more ways of killing than one. She couldn't bear unkindness from those she loved, any more than a little tender blossom can bear a north-east wind. And she had the purest, most sensitive conscience in the world. She suffered for all her brother's sins that she knew of, more than a good many tough people—who

call themselves pious, too—suffer for their own!"

Mabel noticed with a heavy heart that Jerry spoke of little Corda in the past, and as if she were already gone from them. "Is there no hope for her?" she asked, tearfully. "Have they good advice? Has anything been left undone? So young a creature! Are they sure they cannot save her?"

"My dear young lady," said Jerry, solemnly, "when you see the little angel face of her, you will know, as I know, that her life is ebbing away fast. And when you see, too, how peaceful and tranquil she is, and think of what her life has been, and was like to be in future, I think you won't desire to keep her here."

"Is—is the brother in the house now?" asked Mabel, as they approached their destination.

"He is in the house, but not in her room. He sits like a log in his own chamber, next to hers, neither moving nor speaking. When she asks for him, he goes in to her bedside and holds her hand, and lets her kiss him and talk to him, but he gets away again directly she will let him go, as if the sight of her were dreadful to him. And well it may be. The old father, up to yesterday, refused to believe in any danger at all. Now I think he sees it, and he is like a demented creature."

"It is a blessing for the child that you are near her, Mr. Shaw," said Mabel.

"Indeed, then, I'm afraid it's the first time in my life that I have been a blessing to any one! But she is very fond of me, the dear little bird; and as to Lingo! Ah, Miss Bell, you know something of him, but what he has been in these days is more than ye could credit."

They reached the house, and entered softly. The cross-grained servant, a good deal subdued in manner, was on the watch for them. "Come up-stairs by yourself first, Miss Bell, dear," said Jerry. "It's a melancholy scene for ye, but you wouldn't have had me disregard the last wishes of the poor darling. I know you've always been good to her, and she loves you with all her heart."

Mabel followed the old man up-stairs, and entered the bedroom. Corda lay passive in the little white bed, and at the first sight of her face, Mabel could not restrain her tears. And yet there was no expression of suffering on it. It was peaceful and serene, with a strange far-away look in the lustrous eyes. Her bright hair lay all curling and waving in rich masses on the pillow, and Mabel could not help observing the singular contrast between the rich strong life there seemed to be in those chesnut tresses, and the evident fading of the pale little countenance beneath them. When the child saw her, she smiled, and feebly held out her arms. "Don't cry, dear Miss Mabel," she whispered. "I am not sorry now. I think it is best. I think it may do some good to—to others if I die."

She lay still again for a minute or two, holding Mabel's hand pressed to her cheek. "My little Corda—dear little Corda, is there anything in the world that I can do for you? Anything that you wish?"

"I wished to see you, and you are here. It seems to me that every one is very good to me. See, papa," she said, weakly, trying to move the curtain on the other side of the bed, "see, dear papa, here is Miss Mabel. Look how happy I am. Do look, papa, it will make you more unsorry."

Mr. Trescott bowed down his head on the side of the bed, and moaned, "Oh, Corda, Corda, don't leave me, Corda. Don't go away from me, my little one, my little one."

A look of trouble flitted across the child's face. "It won't be for long, dear papa," she said. "You will see me again. And I am going to mamma. I am glad mamma is there. She will know me, though I may not know her at first. I am so glad," she repeated in a whisper, "that mamma is there!"

There was silence again, only broken by Mr. Trescott's sobs. Presently Corda drew down Mabel's head, and put her lips to her ear. "Is he here with you?"

"Mr. Charlewood? Yes, darling."

"How good of him to come! He was always good to Corda. Papa, dear, I am going to ask one thing of you, perhaps the last thing I shall ever ask. You won't refuse me, dear?" He could not speak, but made a sign with his head. The child went on: "I want to say a word to Mr. Charlewood and Miss Mabel all by themselves. It won't take a minute, papa. Will you wait outside while I say it?"

Her father rose slowly and left the room, staggering as he went like a drunken man. Jerry Shaw went down to call Clement, and Mabel remained alone with Corda. "See," said the latter, pointing downward to where Lingo was lying perfectly motionless, with his head between his paws, "he has stayed so all day. Poor Lingo!" At her voice the dog raised his head and looked at her with his wistful eyes. Corda stretched down her hand to him, and he licked it gently; but the little effort of the movement seemed to have exhausted her strength, and she fell back on the pillow with closed eyes. Mabel silently bathed her forehead with some eau-de-Cologne, and presently, when she heard Clement's footsteps on the stairs, the child opened her eyes, which looked larger and more lustrous than ever. "Tell him to come in, please," she said to Mabel. Her own voice was growing too weak to be heard at any distance from the bed.

Clement entered and placed himself near Mabel, by Corda's pillow. A smile that was almost joyous in its brightness came into Corda's face as she looked at them both.

"Do you remember, Mr. Charlewood," she said, putting her wasted hand into his, "how you used to come and see me in New Bridge-street, when my bone was broken? You were so kind to me!"

"Poor Corda! You were very kind to me, to forgive me for running over you."

"Oh no, no! I was glad afterwards, because if you had not run over me, I should never have known you or her." She moved her face towards Mabel as she spoke, and the latter bent down and kissed her.

"Now I must try to say what I want to say to you, because poor papa is staying away on purpose. Dear Miss Mabel, would you give me some of that stuff on the table?"

Mabel poured a draught of some medicine from a phial that the child pointed to, and gave it to her. Then she raised the pillows so as to support her in a sitting posture, and sat down by the bedside, holding Corda's hand in hers.

"Mr. Charlewood," the child began, "I found out the other day that you know about—about—some letters that were written, and that made me so very dreadfully sorry and unhappy, that I could not rest until I had tried to do something to prevent their hurting you."

"Dear little Corda, they had done and could do me no harm. Do not let us speak of that, my child."

"Oh, Mr. Charlewood, I must speak of it. It is about that that I so wished to speak. If you had not found out—I do not rightly know how you found it out, but I guess that it was through me—if you had not found out who wrote those letters, I do not think that I should ever have told you. I dare say I was very silly, but I had the hope in my mind that I could make that gentleman, Mr. —"

"M'Culloch?"

"Yes; Mr. M'Culloch know that you were very good, without betraying—anybody."

"Poor little one!"

"Yes; of course it was very silly. But I did not know what to do. And now it has all come out. But what I wanted to say was this: Mr. Charlewood, can people be punished—put in prison—for writing letters like those?"

"Corda, if any such fear is weighing on your mind, be at peace. For your sake, little Corda, those letters shall be put away, and forgotten, as though they had never been. And, further, you may believe, for I tell it you in all truth and seriousness, that they have done no real evil to me or to any one, except to the writer."

"Ah, yes, to him! Thank you, Mr. Charlewood. And now I want just to say one word more. Miss Mabel knows—don't you, dear?—how I love Alf. He has done wrong, I know, and I know you have reason to be very angry with him; but if you would try—oh, if you would try, for my sake, to—forgive him, it would make me so happy! You can't quite understand, perhaps, but Miss Mabel can, because she knows how she should feel if it were little Dooley, who was a grown man, and had gone wrong, like my brother, how dearly I love Alf. You know, Mr. Charlewood, my mamma died soon after I was born, and Alf was only quite a little boy, and poor papa was so sorry when mamma died, that perhaps he did not take so much care of Alf, nor seem so fond of him,

as he might have done if mamma had lived. Alf used to be very good to me when I was a little tiny weakly child. I remember when he would carry me up and down stairs in his arms, because I was so small and weak, and got tired so easily."

Mabel bent down over the sweet pleading face, and kissed it. Her tears fell warm on Corda's chesnut curls as she did so.

"And, do you know," continued the child, gazing up at Clement with earnest eyes, "do you know, that when Alf was so successful, and that rich lady made so much of him, and offered to bring him to London, he said, all the time, that he would take care of me, and that if he grew rich I should grow rich too. And it is only two or three days ago that he was planning to take me abroad with him to make me well and strong."

"I hope he loves you, Corda. He would be worse than I have words to say, if he did not."

"Oh, but he does; he does, indeed!" cried Corda, eagerly; "and I wanted so much to tell you so, for fear you should think that he had been unkind to me. He is cross sometimes, because his temper is passionate. But, now that I am ill, you don't know how sorry he is. He sits in the next room all day long, without going out, that he may be near me when I want to see him. And they say he looks so melancholy, and scarcely speaks a word. If ever he did anything to vex me, I know he is very, very sorry for it now. And when I am gone away he will be more sorry still. But, though it grieves me sometimes to think of that, I like to know that he is sorry, because, perhaps, it may help to—make him good."

Two large tears, the first they had seen her shed, rolled down Corda's cheeks as she spoke, and she put up her hand to cover her eyes, and lay silent for some minutes. By-and-by she looked up again, this time at Mabel, and said:

"Dear Miss Mabel, you were always so kind to Corda, and I loved you from the first day I saw you, that I think you will be good to poor papa, if you can, for my sake. He may be glad to talk to somebody about his little girl, to somebody who loved her as you did—"

"As I do, Corda," broke in Mabel, weeping, "as I do love you, my sweet good darling!"

"Yes, dear. But it will soon be over. And then papa will be very lonely; and if you would let him come and see you sometimes, and talk of the old times, it would be very good of you."

"I promise, dear child, I promise, faithfully, to fulfil your wishes. But, Corda dear, perhaps you may yet get better. You are so young, there should be so many years of life before you."

The child shook her head gently. She smiled, and the same far-away gaze came into her eyes that they had seen there before.

"No, no; I am going to mamma. I am not sorry—only a little sorry for them—and I shall be so happy with mamma."

Then, turning her eyes on Clement, she said, softly:

"Give me your hand, please, Mr. Charlewood."

He gave it, and she took Mabel's also, and joined the two together in her feeble clasp.

"My two good friends," she whispered, "my two kind ones. Some day, when you are married to each other——" She broke off, feeling Clement start, and looked up. "You will be married to each other, some day, won't you? I always used to like to think of that, long ago. Some day, when you are very glad and happy together, you will think of little Corda, and it will be sweet for you to know that you were good to her, and that she was very, very grateful."

The two hands she held met in a long clinging pressure. Strange that the two beings, whom the brother had striven so hard to sunder, should be joined in one clasp by the sister's innocent childish hand!

"Yes," said Corda, smiling faintly, "you will be very happy. Nothing is so happy as really *loving*, I think. And you do love each other."

Mabel was kneeling, with her cheek on the pillow beside the little head covered with bright burnished waving tresses. There was silence, only broken by the low sobs which Mabel could not altogether repress. Corda closed her eyes again, and remained so motionless, that, for a moment, they thought she had fainted, but presently she opened them wide and looked around her. There was a change coming over her face, a change that heralded the end, as both the watchers felt too surely.

"Papa," said Corda, in so low a voice, that Mabel, whose ear was at her lips, could scarcely hear it. "Call papa and Alf."

Mabel signed to Clement, who left the room, and presently returned with Jerry Shaw and the child's father. The latter flung himself on his knees, by the bed, opposite to Mabel. He seized one of the dying child's hands, and pressed it to his breast, as though, by holding it fast, he could keep her with him. Corda's glance wandered uneasily round the room.

"Your brother?" said Jerry Shaw. "Yes, mavourneen. He is coming."

As he spoke, the dog uttered a low growl, instantly suppressed, and Alfred Trescott entered the room. The child's face lighted up at the sight of him, even at that moment, and she made a sign with her eyes that he should approach her. It would be hard to conceive a countenance so haggard, worn, and terrible in its evil beauty as Alfred's, standing there, with his dark eyes fixed on his little sister, and seeming neither to heed nor see any of the other occupants of the chamber. All the history of his wasted and perverted youth was written on his face. He came slowly towards

the bed, and suffered the child to take his hand and kiss it.

"Good-bye, darling Alf," she said. "Be good, Alf. Be good, dear, and you will be happy when I am gone."

"Corda!" the voice that came from his lips startled all present. It did not seem to belong to him. It was hollow, and hoarse, and broken. "Corda, you are not going!"

"Yes, dear, to mamma. Love me, Alf, and—and—be good to poor papa."

"No, no, Corda. No, you must not die. You shall not die. Stay, Corda! Little Corda, the only creature on this earth who cares for me, stay awhile, Corda. I *cannot* let you go; I must have time to be better to you. Live, Corda, only live, and you will see; I will be good to you—I will—I will."

His face was convulsed, but there was no tear in his eyes, and he stood with his hand on hers, looking down upon her with the despairing gaze of a drowning man who sees the lost plank to which he clung shattered and lost.

Mabel passed her arm round the child, supporting her, and gently wiped her forehead with a handkerchief. "Don't cry," said Corda. "Don't be sorry, all of you. I think—I—hear mamma. It seems as if—as if—there were a voice calling me, ever so far away. It must be—mamma. Good-bye, papa. Kiss me, Alf, my own brother—my darling—be—good—God bless you, Alf. How dark it is! That is Mabel's hand, I know. God bless you, dear." Suddenly she sat upright, as though struggling for breath; but in a moment the most lovely smile beamed over her sweet face, she stretched her arms out before her, crying, "Yes, yes, it *is* mamma! She is calling me again. Oh, mamma, mamma, take Corda!" And fell back in Mabel's arms as softly as a little wave that melts upon the summer sea—dead.

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